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# MAN AND REASON

RAM GOPAL

## About the book...

*Man and Reason* is a unique work presented by Mr. Ram Gopal, who is well known as a historian. A good deal of original thinking has gone into the book. It is a story of mankind with a striking difference—how evil in the economic life of human society began and how it grew into a monster of sins. The story of mankind, according to the author, is the story of the evolution of an economic system in which the political power has been legalising and mysticism of religions upholding an unjust and immoral order. Mr. Ram Gopal wades through the hidden forces of economic evils, meeting the founders of prominent religions and political thinkers, and analysing how their work has been undone by those forces. He tells a marvellous story in an interesting manner. This book addressed to the United Nations, proposes solutions for lasting peace.

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**To  
The United Nations**





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To  
The United Nations

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Ram Gopal



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## PREFACE

Several eminent writers have told the story of mankind, and there was little attraction left for me to retell it. But for some years, I have been feeling that while the story acquaints the reader with the evolution from primitive ages to the present day, it leaves him uninformed about the evolution of evil from a tiny size to enormous proportions. If what is told should be purposeful, the story of mankind should tell how evil was born and how it has been nurtured through the ages. As man moved on from age to age, evil accompanied him like his own shadow, and the shadow lengthened with his mental growth. And as the shadow grew longer, the evil assumed the lead, making man its shadow. Assuming the lead, what havoc evil has been doing is, therefore, the essential part of the story of mankind. That part is the story of the evolution of surplus, which I have attempted to tell in this book. That is my main theme; the story of mankind is only the crowded fair through which the caravan of the theme moves on.

There is close relationship between surplus and needs. When the mind has fully grasped the significance of this relationship, it will reject the theory, in the case of many needs, that man exerts his energy to give himself what he needs. To understand why it should be rejected, we will have to restudy the story of mankind, fixing our attention always on the movements of human society's hidden force, the force of surplus. Then, as we will be wading through the first chapters of the story—the chapters giving a narrative of the early period of settled life—we will find how surplus made its appearance and how the men possessing it made use of it. And as we proceed from age to age, we shall come across different devices being employed to multiply surplus and also to multiply its uses. The uses of surplus were the tree, and surplus itself was the root. The tree was visible, and the root lay hidden underground. Men enjoying themselves in the shade of the tree did not think of the root: the writers of the story of mankind showed their readers the tree and ignored the root. There is difference between seeing and studying; if they studied the tree with a purpose, the root would not have escaped their attention. Then, they would have known that surplus was the father of many 'needs'. The power provided by surplus to one man enabled him to dictate to several others



what they should prepare for him—he, and not they, enjoyed the things thus prepared. It was the overbearing influence of the shade which instigated a thinker like Aristotle to declare that a slave was a part of his master's property—the slave was the master's need.

The more interesting parts of the story of mankind are those in which surplus invokes beliefs and religion, and perverts the ethical content of both to vindicate itself. It makes supreme endeavours to cover up reason with unreason, rationalism with mysticism. Mysticism owes its birth to incomprehensibility of nature's manifestations; taking advantage of man's helplessness in this sphere, surplus cleverly mixes up the comprehensible with the incomprehensible and tells the credulous that it also owes its birth to mysticism. Beliefs and religion, thus defiled, either ignore the swarm of evils created by surplus or tolerate them with equanimity. The many evils afflicting the world are well known, and need not be recapitulated here; our purpose will be duly served if we can prove, with the history of mankind, that all evils have sprung from surplus, and that all systems produced by best brains to regulate human affairs have been vitiated by it.

The present book is an attempt in this direction. It is, in a way, the story of mankind, no doubt; but it is not an exhaustive history. I have used the story only as a vehicle to carry the reader through the long journey strewn with the bones of victims of surplus on the one side and the magnificence of surplus on the other. I have avoided discussing socialism and communism as such. I have, however, re-examined Marx's theory of surplus value and briefly commented on other theories with a view to determining the place and ownership of machinery. Once we concede that divisions of the world into countries or nations are mere accidents of history and so is the division of resources, we will realize that (1) the resources must be redistributed equitably, (2) there is no legality in national barriers claiming sacrosanctity with a view to retaining disproportionate share of natural resources, (3) inventions adding to human welfare are part of resources, and (4) surplus value presents a truncated picture, and surplus the whole of it, as one finds it in a village, in a town, in a city, in a country and in the whole world.

How surplus should be made ineffective, not by violence but non-violently, is the pertinent question to answer. I have attempted to answer it in the last chapter.

RAM GOPAL

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## Chapter I

### EXPERIENCE AND THINKING

The innumerable creatures of the earth are all born with hunger; to satisfy hunger is their struggle from birth to death. The struggle differs from creature to creature. Some have just close to their habitat plentiful supply of the food they need; for example, those that need only earth to suck to satisfy their hunger have practically no difficulty to encounter. Some have to move about and traverse long distances, and yet are not sure of a full meal; nature endows them with craftiness or strength of limb as if arming them with the wherewithal to fight for food. In this part of its functioning, nature manifests itself in a variety of ways and exposes itself to the charge of lawlessness. The lion, for example, must like other creatures, fill its belly; but the way ordained for it by nature is repulsive to man's sense of reason and sympathy. Pangs of hunger compel the lion to rush towards a quietly-grazing cow; with the consciousness of its superior physical force, it pounces upon the victim and makes a meal out of it. Craftiness, the other attribute of nature, may be illustrated by the lizard's struggle for food. It moves silently and cautiously towards an insect, and then jumping over it with all the force it possesses, swallows it. Without the use of craftiness, the lizard will remain hungry and die of starvation, even as the big fish will if it spares the small fish.

What feeling is man seized of when he sees this lawlessness or law of nature in operation? The answer is: the feeling born of the sense of pain. Most creatures are innately sensitive to pain and do not need the experience of injury to understand it. We see this being proved every moment. A bird, for example, has no experience of being caught and injured by man; and yet it fears him. The experience of injury, added to this inborn attribute, creates in man a sense of sympathy: when he sees a lion breaking open a cow, his sense of pain and sympathy is spontaneously aroused. If there were no pain, there would have been no sympathy and no occasion for man to call nature's behaviour lawless. From time to time, the world has given birth to men who have asked themselves and their fellow beings: can this lawlessness not be stopped? They have



failed to produce an effective answer, and contented themselves with challenging nature in a restricted sphere of creation—the human family.

Like that of the animals, man's own behaviour too was 'natural'—lawless. For how long has man been passing through the process of evolution and how he first appeared in his present form is not a relevant question here. We are concerned with that phase of the evolutionary process which saw him beginning to reflect—discriminating between reason and unreason, right and wrong.

These attributes man did not possess when, like other creatures, he wandered for food; he was not much different from them in his behaviour. He would kill weaker animals; he would at times snatch food from the weaker wanderer of his own species. The latter behaviour was prompted by man's natural sensitiveness to comfort and discomfort: instinctively do creatures know what is comfort and what is discomfort, and prefer attainment of food without physical exertion to that with exertion. Man, mentally superior to animals, was more prone to this bias. But for most men, exertion was inevitable; without it there would be no food—killing an animal for food or picking fruits from a tree also required application of limbs. And human beings were divided, generally speaking, into two sections: those of weaker limbs and those possessing greater physical strength. The division fitted in with the so-called law of nature, the strong exploiting or devouring the weak. It is amusing to think of nature as lawless. A cow grazes all day wandering hither and thither and covering a long distance to fill its belly, but a lion, capable of more exertion, acquires its food within minutes. Man behaved almost similarly. The strong, who with his better physical capacity, could exert himself partly for the weak also, appropriated the latter's labour and left him hungry.

It was with the consciousness of his superior strength that the strong advanced towards the weak to deprive him of the fruit of his labour. If the weak resisted, the strong used his superior physical strength to put him down. The amount of exertion applied by the strong in subduing the weak might be equal to that usually required to gathering food, but it would be pointless to ask, why did the strong not prefer honest labour to robbery. Fear of the strong is so overpowering that the weak often surrender meekly; it is seldom that a weak man offers resistance to a strong man.

In this manifestation of nature, men were not wholly like other animals. There may have been men, who, in spite



of their superior physical force and consciousness of it, may have been affected by what came to be known as sympathy, and may have in sheer compassion resisted the temptation of feeding themselves on the labour of the weak. They may have even given fight to the strong to save a victim. In man, the sense of sympathy comes from the sense of imaginative understanding—an understanding which makes him realise the value of exertion spent over acquirement of food. But why is this attribute, which distinguishes man from animals, not equally manifest in all human beings? It is a difficult question to answer. One may say that the behaviour by which the strong deprive the weak of the fruit of their labour is the way of nature, whose manifestation must have preceded the birth of sympathetic behaviour; the element of sympathy came to man from the exercise of his mental faculty, and appeared as a challenge to nature's lawlessness. A contrary suggestion about nature would give rise to the question: why is it natural for a lion to feed itself on lower animals and why is it natural for a bulkier animal, the elephant, to feed on vegetation?

Nature demolishes man's little edifice of sympathy by turning his eyes to the phenomenon of immeasurable pain and destruction that goes on every moment, and in which man himself acts—as nature wishes him to act—as pain-giver and killer. He tramples under his feet as he walks millions of insects, breaking the limbs of some and killing others instantaneously. He swallows millions of lives with a glass of water; nay, he crushes between his teeth, with the fruit he is eating, so many germs while these are yet in the embryonic stage. Nature thus ridicules the first product of man's mental faculty—sympathy. It asks him, why should only the objects of broad visuality excite his sympathy? The killing of a goat by a tiger is quite as painful an operation as the trampling of an insect to death by man. Both are natural operations: man must move about to secure food, and the tiger must kill the goat for the same purpose. (We are discussing here the man who lived generally on vegetation, and not his counterpart in the regions where, for want of vegetation, he began his career on the earth as a carnivore. The latter's access to vegetation in the course of time must have made him susceptible to the painful operation of broad visuality.)

But man ignores this reasoning, and reacts with sympathy only to an operation of pain that is broadly visible to him. If a fly falls into boiling water, man's sensuous equilibrium is not disturbed; but if it is a human



being, he would at once be smitten with the deepest feeling of sympathy, and endeavour, even at some risk to himself, to save the fellow being in distress. Sympathy has of course no limitations, and can be seen being extended at times to lower creatures. A fly slipping into a glass of water and floating over it may excite sympathy of the man sitting nearby, and he may extricate it with the tip of his finger and put it on the ground so that it might dry its wings and fly again. This behaviour on the part of man is extraordinary, and can be contrasted with that in which a man ignores a drowning man even as he would ignore a drowning fly. Sympathy, like understanding, is a possession whose degree differs from man to man. But as a rule, broad visuality determines the limit of man's sympathy. The limit gets narrower by the knowledge of the unavailability of pain: man sees hundreds of flies dying a miserable death every day; seldom does he see his fellow beings dying such a death. He develops an artificial impulse; it is a state of mind in which his sympathy is largely limited to his own fellow beings. His helplessness is a plausible excuse of the limitation he eventually sets on his sympathy. He cannot stop the operation of nature in which creatures other than his own species die or are killed as a matter of course.

The helplessness makes man realise that he is wholly different from other creatures towards whom his behaviour can be, without any injury to his sense of sympathy, in keeping with the law of nature—the law under which one animal kills the other. Man, they say, is not a carnivorous animal. His first preference must have been vegetarian food. The lack of it must have compelled him to take to flesh-eating, and therefore his attitude towards edible animals became that of the lion towards them. Man behaved as freely as did other animals; in fact, with his superior understanding and superior physical form in which hands played a role, he felt there was no restriction on him save that of some consideration towards fellow human beings. He would put different kinds of animals to different uses to make his life comfortable. He would catch milch cows, goats and buffalos, and make their milk his food. His sympathy, which should make him realise that he is depriving the sucking young ones of the food nature has provided for them, does not deter him. He catches a horse, deprives the poor animal of its freedom, and uses it for his own comfort. Like the lion, man eats lower animals, but unlike it, he enslaves them. And yet, he is merciful and sympathetic. He would like to feed his milch cow and pack



horse well; an injury caused to them would excite his compassion and sympathy, and he would attend to them even as he would to a human being. With his sense of reasoning restrained by his selfishness at a point, he would not entertain the feeling that the victim animals would prefer freedom to move about and feed their young ones to his mercy and sympathy. Man, whose understanding questions the lawlessness of nature, betrays in his practical behaviour affinity with it, and in his ceaseless effort to add to his comforts becomes master of the earth, making every object subordinate to him. He leaves the great animal-killer, the lion, far behind. A single stroke of his destructive activity can deprive thousands of animals of the food nature has provided for them.

Behaving naturally, man proceeded further to make use of animals. The effect of cold as of heat was bound to be felt by him, and it occurred to him that animal skin could serve him as a coat. He would catch a deer or a goat, kill it with stones without any mercy, and remove with his hands the flesh and bones to get a sheet of skin. He would perform this operation even if he got enough to eat from the vegetation and did not need animal flesh.

As the consciousness of comfort developed, man, in his destructive tendency, excelled the ferocity of carnivorous animals. He killed lower creatures for his little comforts. When he discovered blood-sucking parasites causing him pain he not only removed them but killed them as if he was removing the dirt of dry leaves from under the tree where he wanted to lie to rest for a while. The very sight of a snake or a scorpion caused him apprehension of the bite whose experience he had gained from the effect on some of his companions, and he killed it. To leave it alive, he knew, would mean leaving a risk alive for future. A snake's similar behaviour towards a ferocious animal would not endanger its life; even a cow's cautiousness would not be aroused at the sight of a snake and she would not trample it under her feet.

Man has both an instinct to sympathise, that is, to have mercy, and an instinct to kill. The instinct acts almost spontaneously; he kills little creatures for mere fun or to satisfy his curiosity. While passing a while of his leisure sitting on the ground, he looks at a strange insect quietly creeping. He stops it: he first teases it, and then kills it with his finger or with a piece of stone. At another time, he is likely to be torn by a feeling of compassion which prevails over his impulse to enjoy a fatal fun. Yet at another



time, he manages to catch a bird, and tears off one of its wings to see whether it can fly with the one left. He does things impulsively and not logically. Seldom does he question himself about his deeds, in whose performance he acts *naturally* and is not restrained by reason.

Primitive man of prelogical age started on his journey of life of millions of years with his usual behaviour as the basis of his future exploits, in which his self was always the determining factor. He was not troubled by a feeling of consideration for his fellow human beings as he was not by such consideration for animals. He uprooted and carried away a vegetable creeper whose fruits he relished and did not pause to think that if he would let it remain, others could also satisfy their hunger like himself. This behaviour was not different from that of a cow, for example. In his wanderings looking for food, he came across corn-producing plants; he picked up some, and trampled down others unmindful of the consequences to other people whom he deprived, for no gain of his own, of food. He drifted with nature; his companions in the kingdom of nature, like cows, goats, buffalos, behaved similarly. Later, experience and understanding suggested to him that preservation was necessary: when he was faced with lack of food, he was reminded of the creeper he had destroyed as also of the animals who would destroy it even if he left it. And an idea was born in his mind: he must have this creeper or that fruit tree or that plot of corn plants all to himself; no other creature, whether man or animal, should partake in it. He made this spot his home and armed himself; he made a stick from the twig of a tree and collected a heap of stones—these served him as his arms. He flung stones at men or animals proceeding towards his spot for food; if the stones missed their mark or the victim managed to advance up to the spot, he lifted his stick and gave a fight. If he was defeated by his rival, he would be revenged upon; either he would be killed or sent away weeping.

This stage was man's second major conflict with his fellow beings—the first was when the strong dispossessed the weak of the fruit of their labour or one man fought another to get a larger share from the same source of food; it was like two dogs' fight over a piece of flesh or bone. The second stage cannot be regarded as a mark of progress towards the evolution of just and rational behaviour; it was a manifestation of man's acquisition of prudence—how to ensure regular supply of food was the question the day-to-day difficulty put to him, and the answer he got was, by

appropriating exclusively to himself a certain plot of food resources.



## Chapter II

### FROM CHAOS TO CHAOS

With the idea of exclusive possession of food resources entering man's mind, he opened a new chapter in the history of his evolution. Formerly, the earth, its produce, belonged to the entire creation of nature, and although this was, to the rational being of later ages, an anarchical state, every creature could do as it pleased in the domain of nature: he could go anywhere for food. Now a conflict, hitherto unknown, appeared, and while animals continued to behave in the old way, men tended to emulate the fellow being who appropriated exclusively to himself part of nature's resources. What was decried as an extremely provocative act and what had led to fights between the possessor and others became the forerunner of a system. The system was preceded by a long-drawn-out struggle, in which the possessors outlived the challengers, and they developed the lands they had forcibly occupied: they brought food plants from distant places and grew fruit trees. Having learnt from experience that different crops came up and ripened at different periods of the year, they raised their own crops. It was a big step towards the limitless progress awaiting man. A man could get from the crop he raised in his small plot a quantity (for example) of wheat which he used to pick up from an area ten times, even a hundred times, larger. It was the demonstration of a lesson to the defeated challengers, and they acknowledged the possessors as wiser men and emulated them.

And what was supposed to be the violation of nature's law became the origin of man's law. Private possessions began to multiply, and man began to develop an enlightened sense of self-interest. It was necessary, he realized, if conflict was to be avoided whose outcome could not always be foretold, that one should not encroach in any way on another's possession so that each might fully enjoy the fruit of his labour. It became a convention not to interfere with each other's private possession. This convention was observed with a sense of sanctity, and was thus the first ingredient of man's religion or the first law he gave himself. The law had, in the very nature of things, a limited application: only those who had settled down to the new



way of life had the obligation to abide by it. Others, who still regarded private possession as an unnatural device to deprive creatures of the free use of nature's bounty, did not reconcile themselves to the new dispensation, and would, as of right, attempt to move into the possessions as they did into the 'free' areas. They formed their own groups like the groups of the possessors, and attacked the latter with a view to asserting their 'right'.

Men of wisdom and reason on the two sides justified their respective stands. Those on the side of the possessors contended that the private possession was what their own forethought and prudence and physical effort had given them and that without it man could not get a better and richer and assured supply of food; they invited the challengers to take to the system they had adopted and abide by the law they had made by common consent. The challengers argued that man's or animal's freedom to move about in quest for food and pleasure should not be restricted; that by making the sites of rich vegetation their private property, the possessors had deprived the general mass of creation of the freedom they had always been enjoying. "We were not consulted," they asserted, "when the possessors occupied the best sites and declared them closed to the rest of the creation." They rejected the plea that private possessions had been enriched with the mental guidance and physical effort of the possessors, saying that the achievement was of no consequence to the mass of the creation to whom the plots of private possession were like little wounds in the body of free earth.

But the possessors would not budge from the stand they had taken, and their easy living excited in the course of time the envy of the challengers, who were themselves gradually converted to the way of their enemies.

The roots of the system of private possession were going deeper, and each possession unit constructed a shelter for itself. The possessors were now living a co-operative life; they helped one another in operations that were beyond the capacity of a single individual's physical strength. A thought came to a man that the tree that served as a shelter to him could be utilised to prepare a better shelter. The thought was discussed, and several men applied the combined might of their hands to bending and breaking thick branches of trees. The house-building operations were conducted in the rainy season, when the ground was wet and soft, and holes could be dug with hard twigs. The branches were fixed in the holes in perpendicular form, and



over them were placed lighter long branches tied with a kind of long grass. A network of roof was thus made and over it were spread green leaves of trees. In order that the leaves might not be blown away by strong winds, they were covered with a thick layer of mud. Ever since man had thought of growing food plants in the plot under his exclusive possession, he had been making use of trees; he would make of a little branch of tree a pointed instrument with which he dug the earth for raising food crops.

The so-called settled life provided man with new experiences and gave him ever new ideas. He went into the wood, and finding a cluster of bamboos, he stopped there. He picked up one of the dry bamboos lying beside the cluster; it was much lighter than the tree branch he had made use of in building his shelter, and unlike the branch it was straight without any twigs shooting out of it. This, he thought, would serve as a better building material. He picked up another dry piece of bamboo which seemed to have been trampled upon by a heavy thing, most probably the feet of an elephant. This accidental trampling made it easier for him to split the bamboo lengthwise into two, and he was happier still. Bamboo pieces split up in this manner and woven crosswise into one another would make a decent, light framework for the roof of his shelter, he said to himself. He put his idea into effect, and with the mortar of mud and grass, he made an improvement on the roof he had prepared earlier.

He had already discovered that the bamboo was a hollow thing. This discovery provided him with a solution of another difficulty he had been experiencing. He had his crops, his trees, his hut, but no water ready at hand. He had to traverse a distance to reach the water spring; now he carried a few pieces of bamboo with him. He filled the tubes with water, and was happy that he was able to keep a little supply of water at his residence and would not have to run to the stream every time he felt thirsty. By and by he realized that the bamboo was a great discovery. He made thatches from its leaves; with its skin, he made baskets to serve him as containers of the produce of his fields and mats to lie on. He was getting accustomed to comforts. Now he would not sit or lie on bare ground, and the mat became a necessity. And he would not store the produce of his field on the bare ground in a corner of his hut; he would keep it in the baskets without which his household was incomplete. He would carry in a basket a number of bamboo tubes to the stream, and keep in his hut



a 'plentiful' supply of water. He laughed thinking of his foolishness when he took his meal at the hut and went to the stream to drink water.

The settled man was establishing ever new records of what is called progress. He saw fire being produced by the friction of bamboos or other trees, and now that he had a home he said to himself he should preserve fire to keep himself warm in winter. Fuel—cow dung cakes and dry wood—he had in plenty, and he made fire his permanent companion. He did not yet know that fire could be put to another use—to make food more tasty. He learnt it accidentally. An eatable, say a potato, happened to fall into fire. When he noticed the thing after a while, he pulled it out; its hardness had been softened. He ate it, and found to his agreeable surprise that he was eating a delicacy. Then he made experiments with other articles. He put a little corn on the burning coal, but before he could separate it from the fire, it had become totally black, and the taste was repulsive. It occurred to him that corn could not stand red-hot fire. The second time he made the experiment, he made full use of the experience he had gained. He let the fire spend its fury, and put a handful of corn into it when it was hot cinder. After a while, he removed the ash, and was happy to find that the corn too had become soft and more tasty; chewing became easy, and no longer did his teeth need to employ a considerable amount of force to crush it.

Fire came to man as a great transformer of his life. Chance and his own inquisitiveness provided him with several uses of fire which meant provision of new methods of storing water and making food more relishing. One of the possessors, while warming himself before the everlasting fire, thought of a fun. He made little balls of mud and threw them into fire. He forgot all about the fun, and after a few days, while he was removing the ash, his fingers felt the touch of those little balls. He picked them up to see what change the fire had made in them. They had become reddish and very hard, and what gave him an idea was the fact that they would not dissolve in water. If he made a hollow thing, he said, and burnt it similarly, he could get a better water-container. He put the idea into practice, and the pot was born. He would now make pots of different sizes, and put them to different uses. Instead of parching the eatables direct in fire, he learnt to boil them with water in the pot. His food now gave a different taste, and he improved on it further by mixing in it a little salt which he



got from the saline earth.

Man's progress towards better living is an account of his continuous additions to his possessions and continuous improvement on the use of nature's material wealth. Stone with which he added to his physical strength and killed little animals to make food of them suggested itself as of utility in the process of improving his food. He took home two pieces of stone, one of them being flat, and employed them to grind corn. His teeth were becoming accustomed to soft things, and it had occurred to him that if corn could be made into powder, he could prepare what he later on called bread. He first baked his bread in the pot, and the difficulty he experienced suggested to him that he should prepare a mud plate and burn it in the same way as he did the pot. Cooking enabled him to discriminate between different kinds of corn; for example, rice did not need to be ground because mere boiling made it so soft that teeth could chew it with little effort. Men of this early stage in the evolution of settled life, who came to be known as Neolithic men, made different uses of different kinds of stones: they used flat heavy pieces in house construction; and they collected small pieces inside their huts to serve them as arms. With them they would repel those who attacked their settled life. They developed stone art, and made the pointed pieces sharper to serve them as knives or implements to dig earth, and turn wood pieces into desirable domestic necessities.

Stone helped man to acquire the source of a delicious, health-giving food—milk. The early man asked himself whether he could become a sharer with the calf in the cow's milk. It was a new idea, and he proceeded to give effect to it. He tried to catch a milch cow, and failed; he tried again, and again he failed. Then, he thought of a device; he ran after it, hitting it repeatedly with stones; and the injured animal fell down. He cried out with mirth, 'I have succeeded'. Having already learnt how to make rope, he put it round the neck of the cow. After the animal had given its injured limbs a little rest and was in a position to be on its legs again, he carried it home with the calf. If man did not possess hands, he would have been inferior in physical strength to the cow, and could never bring it under his control. The cow was now man's prisoner, a bonded slave, and would no more think of resisting him; even its horns, the weapon provided by nature, seemed to it much inferior to man's hands with which he could hurl stones. Domestication of cow by man must have cost him months



of patient endeavour: he kept it tied, brought grass for it, and detached it from the free wandering state. In the long-drawn-out process, never did man, the thinking animal, pause to think that he was depriving the calf of its natural due. On the contrary, he let his sense of justice be perverted by the argument that the new food he had secured was the result of so much physical prowess and mental exercise he had to employ. The poor cow could not reply to his argument, nor could the calf, to whom its mother's milk had been denied. This feat of man was a victory of dexterity over helplessness.

In the course of time, cows, goats, and buffalos became man's private property like the land and trees of his plot. He had learnt by experience that only herbivorous animals could readily respond to domestication, and he limited his exploitation to them. If the cow could be tamed, so could the bullock or horse or donkey; and if the cow produced a fine article of food, a male animal could be used to give man a ride on its back. And instead of covering distances on foot, he used the bullock or horse to carry him to his destinations. The male animal was man's first most obedient servant; it was used as a pack animal, and carried on its back the load that man used to carry on his own head or shoulders.

While man was domesticating animals, some of the lower species came to him voluntarily and became his companions. These were dogs, cats, etc. The dog that happened to pass by his hut and ate the bits of cooked food left over and thrown out by him would visit the place regularly, preferring this food to what it got by its own effort. The bits were to be found outside the hut daily, and the supply being thus assured, the dog made the place its permanent abode. The man tolerated him, and discovering that this animal was gifted with a better sense of understanding than other animals and barked at strangers, whether men or animals, he began to treat it as a part of his establishment. This voluntary comer—the watchdog—became dear to man; by its barks, it always forewarned him of the coming danger. And now the dog was a faithful servant and man the master. And the cat; possessing a strong sense of smell, it was attracted from a distance to the corner of the hut where the pot full of milk had been kept. The new arrival entered the hut quietly, so quietly that the man took no notice of it, and drank as much of the milk as it hurriedly could. The man did not like its visits and hurled stones at it, but for a chance of getting a little milk, it took all risks



and continued moving into the hut stealthily.

The most important associate of this man of property was his bed companion, woman. He developed aversion to the prevalent practice of any woman being used by any man for the satisfaction of his sex urge; the practice, which was quite consistent with the nature's way of free access of every creature to every thing of use, did no longer fit in with his concept of living. He chose a woman and assured her food and protection, and she consented to belong exclusively to him; she also worked to keep the man's household going. But being weaker than man, she was treated, with her own tacit approval, as subordinate to her male companion. There was a sense of comfort and certainty in her subordination: there was some one who could help her during the period of expectancy when her physical capacity suffered a setback. She had now a place where her child, formerly exposed to constant danger, could remain safe. Time was, she recalled, when nobody owned her child and nobody thought of her after conception, and she wandered helplessly in her declining health; her quest for food was then her own worry. Now she was happy and did not regret the loss of freedom when she moved about anywhere in the domain of nature with any man.

The settled man had now his wife, his children, his cow, goat, buffalo, horse, his trees and fields, and other things that constituted his household. By and by, in the course of years, he had accumulated a load of worries on his head. But he was getting accustomed to his new state, and did not think with regret of the past when he satisfied his hunger and sex urge without the worry of maintaining possessions and keeping the household going. He was now a man of attachment: he was attached to his wife; he was attached to his children—in the unsettled life also, he produced children, but he did not know them and did not own them; he was attached to his pet animals; and he was attached to his immovable property. Thought of freedom from these would shake him to his marrow; he would not have the old freedom even if food was assured him without worry. His preference for worries is understandable. His mind was surcharged with new feelings. His wife attended him devotedly during his illness—a sex companion may have behaved similarly in his pre-settled life, but how could he get the feeling that her attention was not transitory when he knew that there was no exclusiveness in her devotion.

His family life was a life of enlightened self-interest;



the mutual regard and love was a refined term for the service they gave to and expected from each other. The young ones, in their tender age, were fed and protected by the parents, and in the latter's old age, the former discharged the same function. It was a tacit arrangement; and since it was not contractual, they called it duty—duty of parents towards children and of children towards parents. It was a higher rung of what came to be called civilization: while in the case of the relationship between man and wife, the sense of duty followed an understanding in the nature of a contract, more formal than informal, in the case of their offspring, first there was affection, then a sense of duty, and the sense of contract came only when man pondered in his old age over the journey of life he had traversed. It was this sense which made him assert his right before the negligent sons and daughters. He reminded them they must do their duty unto him even as he did his unto them.

Man up to now was motivated wholly by self-interest, and was not, in this respect, different from animals. He thought of himself when he made property; and he thought wholly of himself when he made a woman his wife. That a woman would also get advantages of the settled life was never the consideration with him when he approached her. From the constant association sprang attachment, and from attachment sprang love and mutual regard; the sex relation of course made its own powerful contribution. But man had his likes and dislikes, anger and hatred; and as these were the outburst of a feeling not always born of reason, so was attachment the product of a feeling not born of reason. There can be no clearer demonstration of the transitoriness of attachment and love than the fact that it is reduced to ashes by the fire of anger or hatred.

Thus man's selfishness was taking him onward into civilization. If the wife did not fit in with his selfishness, that is, if she was considered, in his discretion, unassociable for any reason, she was turned out; often even the children would be turned out because they would not fit in in his new family set-up with a new wife. Man's love for his children came from the love he had for his wife, and when this love did not square with his self-interest, he abandoned love for self-interest. Similarly, he would do away with his animal property; he would even kill a milch cow if it interfered with his self-interest.

Man's self-interest at that stage of his transformation cannot be deplored; it will have to be appreciated as a broad



fact of nature. Like all other creatures, his only concern was the self. Every creature exerted itself to finding food; and if man raised an establishment for himself, it was because he was provided by nature with a better mind and, over and above his mental superiority, with a different physical apparatus which enabled him to do so. Some of the feathered creatures that build themselves nests might refute the claim of man's superiority, both mental and physical, and assert that while they possessed an inborn faculty to construct shelters for themselves, man wandered like the beasts for long years. There is truth in the assertion; but man had now taken a new step which is noteworthy for its value of achievement. In his settled life he had extended the scope of his self-interest, which now included his wife and children. His self was no doubt the starting point of his establishment, and he would not abandon it, but the new way of living had gripped him so powerfully that on occasions, he would deny himself food if the supply was scanty and give it to his children. His attachment with them subordinated his natural instinct of primary concern for the self. This was man's first departure from the law (chaos) of nature and it was his great achievement. Man, while in the unsettled state, may have at times been merciful to helpless starving children and may have shared his food with them; now he had a different kind of feeling, a feeling born of a mixture of attachment and responsibility. He had acquired, broadly speaking, a sense of duty towards his dependents and close associates. This sense of duty extended even to his animals. If he brought grass for the tethered cow, it was because he knew that there would be no milk without it; but as his association with the cow grew old, he was even smitten by the feeling that the poor animal was hungry and must be fed. Man, who caused the animal no small amount of pain in the process of domestication, was now so merciful that he would feel pained if it was beaten or left hungry. His self-interest was there all right, but in this case also, as in the case of his children, he had developed a feeling of attachment. Man was a mixture of self-interest and feelings. If the weather was unfavourable and his crops had failed and he was faced with starvation, his self-interest would suppress his emotion, and he would kill the dry cow to get meals for himself and his wife and children. Nevertheless, the new feelings that had come over him in his settled life remained; he was becoming an object of psychological study—how his behaviour had changed and been shaped



anew by the ever-increasing possessions he was collecting around him.

Already, before he had created a family, he had developed a sense of dependence on his fellow beings, who had, like himself, taken to settled life. They all knew that singly they could not defend themselves against attacks of those still sticking to the wandering life, and they constituted themselves into a defence unit so that if one household was attacked, all others would run to it to drive away the attackers. Here again self-interest was the supreme motive which led to the birth of a kind of social order; as years and decades passed, this act of mutual help was called social responsibility, conveying a mistaken sense of doing a good turn to the neighbour. Yet it was not wholly mistaken. A new social sense, different from the original idea of 'give and take' had grown in men's minds, and they would rush to the help of even a neighbour of feeble limbs from whom they could hardly expect a similar help in return. This was another big achievement of the settled life: even those physically incapacitated enjoyed safety and security. Not only this; man's sympathy now manifested itself more positively and with a sense of responsibility, and he spared food from his stock for the disabled neighbour. Self-interest was again in the background, but covered up with the layers of growing multitudinous social life, it had become nearly invisible. Man now called such help charity or his help to a fellow being in distress or the performance of a social responsibility. In fact, it was further expansion of man's self-interest, from the self to the family, and from the family to the neighbourhood. The edifice of a system was coming up on the base of self-interest; only the edifice was now visible, and the base was disappearing from sight. Prudently, the group of households had realized that today's sturdy working man might become infirm tomorrow and consequently be robbed of his capacity to produce food; under the system, help was no longer limited as an arrangement between two men. It could be rendered to any one, and might come to the giver at the time of his need from a different man.

Was man in the settled life in a more reasonable state of mind than his former self or his counterpart still leading wandering life to behave in a manner different from what appeared to him chaos in nature? The answer is, no. The order he was evolving was motivated by his own self-interest, and not by an intention to substitute order for chaos. He set no limit to his acquisition; at home he was



the exclusive master of his property, and yet he moved into the free world to get more things for himself and his family, never pausing to reason that he should either be a free-booter or a settled man. With plentiful possession of vegetable food, he still killed edible animals, betraying his consistency with nature's chaos; in fact his settled life had aggravated his instinct to exploit the chaotic state, and now he longed to have a larger quantity of the eatables he came across than he needed, because he had a place to store the extra quantity. That he was depriving other fellow beings of nature's produce to the extent of his extra possession never crossed his mind. Reason or what he called social sense hardly ever influenced his actions. He rose from chaos to be a man of settled life; but it was due to chaos that he gave himself as much property as he could. He justified his action by perverted reasoning: his property was the result of his labour. Plucking the whole crop of a fruit tree no doubt meant so much physical exertion, but according to reason it meant depriving many creatures, men and others, of their share in the produce of nature.

Ever since the settled life made a beginning, it was holding out its own attraction to wanderers, and more and more of them were taking to it. Those who lagged behind in the race or those whose mental resourcefulness—it may be called craftiness—and physical capacity was inferior to others could give themselves lesser amount of worldly goods. Wanting to settle in the neighbourhood of a settled colony and failing to get as big and as good a plot as the neighbours possessed, they had to content themselves with inferior and smaller lands. Inevitably, therefore, the new settlers, while quickly adapting themselves to the system and customs of the settled society, gave birth to a new mental attitude: they developed and preserved in their minds a sense of envy. But was envy an attitude which could redress their grievance? No, it could not; it did not. And they could not reconcile themselves to what they called unsystematic and unjust appropriation of nature's resources.

They made their grievance appear logical. In the chaotic condition of nature, they contended, there was no system, and anybody could appropriate anything he liked if he had the physical strength; but if in the settled life, men had come to an understanding that they would let everybody enjoy his possessions, then why should not there be another understanding: when the settled life was a systematic way of life, there should be a system by which

nature's resources in a certain given area be made equitably available to all men in that area. They further argued (i) that envy, an evil breeding many evils, should have no basis to flourish on, and the settled life should be made rational; (ii) that the chance should not be the basis of a system, and the early settlers should not continue depriving for all times to come the later settlers of what was free to everybody in the days of wandering life; (iii) that the settled life should be an improvement on the earlier one, and not more chaotic; (iv) that they no doubt discovered something attractive in the settled life before they joined it, but they were driven to it by the feeling that the settled group had with its combined might become more powerful, and their (the new comers') survival was no more possible in the wandering life.

The old settlers did not respond to these pleas, and complications were inevitable to arise in the future. These manifested themselves in a variety of ways.



## Chapter III

### SURPLUS AND ITS EFFECT

In the settled life, men were creating ever new wants; it was an unending list. Those who had put themselves in possession of comparatively bigger properties, got greater incentive to wants from their surplus produce.

Man had learnt to make a plough to till his land and to employ bullocks or horses to relieve him to a great extent of his own physical exertion. From this device an additional advantage accrued to him: the land yielded a larger amount of crop now than it did before he had launched the new reform. What to do with the surplus produce was the pleasant problem before him. His mind at once suggested an answer. It was vaguely this: he could make use of such men as were in economically less favourable circumstances or had not yet taken to settled life, and pass on the surplus to them in return for some service that they would have to do for him. It was a solution for all people possessing surplus, and they proceeded to create new professions. There could be, they told themselves, a class of people whose job should be to prepare ploughs, and that should be their exclusive occupation so that they might become skilled in the work. The suggestion was hailed as wise, and a class of carpenters was born. Then, there came up a new class, that of potters, some of whom invented and developed the potter's wheel. They turned out earthen utensils on a 'mass' scale, and saw to it that the community's need was kept well satisfied. The food producer, being the pivot of the developing economic system of the community, was the leader, and those of the wanderers and others who had not yet been absorbed in any productive work exercised their minds to finding out one job or the other that could provide relief to him and get them a share from his surplus. Partly on their own initiative and partly by his dictation, they created new jobs. Some would make garments for him from hides and skins; some would make footwear from the same material; some took to making ropes; some devised the technique of making mats from the leaves of date trees. In this way, new professions continued coming up, and it became unthinkable, as the decades and centuries rolled by, for the cultivator to do without them. The artisans had of



course appeared as a class dependent on him, but he was now dependent on them to the same degree.

The principal promoter of the classes was the food producer, and the question to which they all addressed themselves was, how much of his produce should be equal to how much of a particular commodity supplied to him. In fact, all constituents of the community being suppliers of one another, the question was, how much of one's product should be supplied for how much of the other's product. And they decided that labour should ordinarily be the determinant: so many articles produced, for example, by the potter would be equal to so much length of rope. And so on. Thus they evolved a system of exchange known as the barter system.

This system, seemingly rational and equitable, had got to be worked with man's traditional impulse of selfishness, which was the basis of the entire structure he had built up. The example of the corn producer was before the men of other professions, and they knew that his labour gave him a surplus amount with which he got not only the things that had become inevitable part of life but also other things which many did not have and which added to his comfort. The producer of surplus corn was in that position because of a chance he had seized in the beginning of settled life. Whatever the cause of surplus, he excited others to emulate him: why should not artisans create an opportunity, whenever it was possible to do so, to make some surplus, with which they too could add to their possessions, to their comforts? The clever among them looked around and declared, there was no equity, no equality in the community. The carpenter, enjoying the monopoly of making ploughs, said if he increased his barter rate, he could get an additional amount of things for his household. The potter said if he did likewise he could buy the luxury of a bedstead, a luxury which some people of the community had already provided themselves with, while many were without it.

The equity of the barter system did not take long to degenerate to a chaotic state, in which every man tried to get a little more than was warranted by the labour put in by him. If man's wants had been pegged at a certain minimum, a minimum determined with equity by common consent of the members of the community, and if the community had made an arrangement to ensure enough production for all the constituents, there would have been no surplus and no consequent urge to use the surplus for

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extra comforts on individual basis and in disregard of its reaction on others.

Man's progress thus far was a progress of his self-interest, a multiplication of his wants, and he indulged in self-delusion by comparing himself to his predecessor, the wanderer, and declaring himself superior. He claimed he had tamed nature, though to a small extent, by removing from the life of the settled community chaos inasmuch as every family now lived in peace and did not disturb the other.

How did he do it in a society in which disharmony born of inequity and inequality existed from the beginning and was persisting? Men of affluence said there should be order in the community, there should be peace, and that would be possible when the different people constituting it observed an attitude of disinterest about one another's properties; each must be contented with what he had. They not only gave expression to this wish but proceeded to ensure observance of the order they contemplated. They paraded their surplus, and appointed with the strength implicit in it some men whom they charged with the duty of fighting and putting down those who might defy the law they had laid down. As before, self-interest asserted itself again: the possessions, whatever some might have been saying about their inequitable and indiscriminate character, had got to be protected. There was little difference between the old state and the new. At the beginning of the settled life, there were fights between the settlers and the wanderers; the former were the possessors and the latter, belonging to free nature, had nothing as their own and did not discriminate between what belonged to nature and what had become private property of certain individuals. Now, man's mind had 'progressed' to a point where he had learnt that fights must be prevented by a show of superior force, and should be resisted only when the preventive measure, the 'law', was challenged.

Ever since the settlers made a departure from the wandering life, they had been insisting for a convention that individual possessions should be treated as sacrosanct. There were challenges to this insistence, but they kept up the zeal and devised different methods, one after the other, not only to preserve their possessions but to thrust the convention on the entire community. As time passed, the convention was given or assumed the force of law.

This gave rise to another social institution, again to be maintained with the surplus produce. After the law had



been made, there arose the problem of its enforcement. The men interested in maintaining the economic status quo and even those who had become inclined to the former's way of thinking because of thefts and fear of thefts, conferred together and decided that one of them, an elderly man, who was regarded as wise and prudent, should be made the administrator of law. At the conference, some referred to other problems of society, such as quarrels, disputes, and suggested that all these formed part of the problem they had assembled to consider. A wise man was therefore made head of the community, and it was decided by common consent that he should withdraw from whatever work he was engaged in and be supported by the entire community; the support to be made of contributions from all the families. Under this agreement, everybody, whether he had a surplus or not, was required to contribute to the headman's fund. The headman was also empowered to use force, should it become necessary, in collecting the contributions from defaulters.

The headman had, in the very nature of his appointment, to work with a closed mind. His duty was to see to it that everybody enjoyed his possessions without interference; how these possessions were acquired and how they originated was not his concern. It was none of his business to see whether the barter system was working in a manner so as to ensure an equitable return to every professional.

Before the headman appeared on the scene, envy, as already stated, had entered man's mind; even a man of surplus envied another possessing greater surplus. Generally, the men of surplus were not unaware of it but dismissed it with a plausible argument: envy was as essential an attribute of man as understanding, and was not excited only by inequality supposedly born of the early settlers' favourable conditions; the reaction would be the same even to the surplus acquired by dint of labour and not by adventitious advantages of pre-settled life—a lazy man would envy the fortune of one who was industrious. This point had a certain logic no doubt, but it lacked intellectual honesty because it did not deal precisely with the kind of envy that had its root in economic inequality. It side-tracked the issue; it did not meet the basic charge that even the new institution was designed to preserve inequitable self-interest of individuals.

Overborne by self-interest, men did not apply their minds to finding an equitable answer; they did not examine the economic structure which they had built up by exploit-



ing nature in its chaotic state, because such an examination, if rationally made, would suggest re-arrangement of the structure. Even the headman, whom the contributions made a man of surplus with which he secured distinguishing comforts, suffered, quite naturally, from the same mental attitude. He was called upon to administer a law made for a definite purpose; and amusingly enough this administrator of law considered himself an administrator of justice, which he was not.

As time passed, the contract between laziness and diligence, by means of which envy was sought to be disposed of, hit the advocates themselves. For example, there would be some one, who had a larger plot of land under his plough and a larger grazing yard than others in the settlement, and would create an organization in which most of the work was done by hired men. For his own limbs, he would have little use, and he would become partly lazy. He would be responsible for the creation of a different kind of surplus, a surplus secured with the labour of others. He would not pause to think for a moment whether he was doing anything wrong. On the contrary, he would contend that by giving work to those who had no land to till or who were not engaged in any other profession, he had managed to produce more with which more people would be able to feed themselves. But the charge that had been continuously made against him and others like him would remain: he was one of the founders of the economy in which inequity was persisting and exciting envy. His privilege of laziness or partial laziness became the breeding ground of other evils.

If food could be had without work many would prefer not to work. The invidious privilege which man of the above organization had given himself was an object of envy; but how could those who had little or no wherewithal to put up a like organization enjoy the 'privilege'? That they might not have to work was their ambition, almost a decision, and they gave effect to it in different ways. To give an illustration, out of the three sons of a settler, one would not work, but despite violent protests he continued getting food from the common kitchen, and was given up as an incorrigible fellow. A lad of another family took to thieving, and gave himself the 'privilege' of laziness. Some were already less exertive than their fellow settlers, and though they were themselves responsible for their less fortunate state, yet they were envious of men economically better situated than themselves.



The life of the community was getting complicated, but the headman looked at it differently. He lamented the degeneration that was setting in, but did not apply his mind to thinking what was the cause, and whether there was a remedy. The functioning of his mental faculty, so far as his duties were concerned, was pegged to the discussions and decisions at the conference, and he would only punish the guilty, and do nothing beyond it. His own living stimulated in others the ambition to live more comfortably with less work. Not much time had elapsed since he was made headman, and they still remembered that he was one of themselves until recently and now he had made himself rich. He needed a strong guard to protect his riches, and the only function of the guards was to sit or stand and keep an eye on bad characters. They were provided with better food and better comfort than many who had to earn their bread by the sweat of their own labour. The headman's guards and other employees were looked upon with envy; many aspired for a chance to be in his employ, but the posts were few and the aspirants many. The unfulfilled ambition nourished envy, and the community witnessed the spectacle of the headman himself becoming a cause of the increasing recidivism. Yet his mind was not disturbed. Perhaps he never realized he was contributing to no small extent to the incidence of crime. Nonchalantly, he went on administering the law, and adding to his possessions: every new year's contributions left with him the usual amount of surplus, which he would use in giving himself fresh comforts. His employees too were getting ever richer, and they were all, in effect, stimulating the tendency to get more for less work.

That the surplus amount, whether in the possession of the headman or of his employees or others, was used for getting things providing extra comfort or pleasure, not available to all people, gave the men, who had developed an inclination to do less exertive work, an opportunity to prepare new articles of use, or impart beauty and art to those already in use. For example, a better framework of the bedstead, more pleasing to the eye, was designed. More man-days of labour were devoted to making it, and consequently its exchange value was raised. In fact, as it was intended to be a prize possession, the value raised was even out of proportion to the extra labour, but it was gladly paid. The addition of beauty to utility recommended itself as desirable to men possessing considerable surplus. A work of art was bound to be as pleasing to those who merely



saw it and did not possess it as to those who possessed it. It was a new branch of progress in the community and was spontaneously applauded. But the discerning men, among those who had no surplus or did not possess enough according to the lowest standard, shook their heads in dismay. They argued that this new development would increasingly turn men from strenuous work to cosy pursuits, and more men would be driven to making non-utility articles with the intention of partaking in the huge surplus of the headman and others.

This argument was countered by the possessors of surplus thus: the class of carpenters, for example, would not be depleted and there would be no dearth of the commonly-used bedsteads if some of the men sacrificed quantity for quality and gave society an art; and more men were available to swell the class. But in the actual result, the plausibility of this argument did not stand. Settled life having become the rule, and nomadism having been reduced to an exception, the land was personal property and was no longer free. Even the unploughed forests belonged to some individuals who had an organized force and declared them as their private property. The increasing population was no doubt bound to swell the different professions, and there was apparently nothing wrong if some devoted themselves to developing the arts. But the arts, in so far as they owed their birth to surplus, were becoming a disturbing element. The community was arriving at a stage where it was confronted with a new dilemma; on the one hand, men of surplus possessed articles of beauty, and, on the other, men of sub-normal standards had to deny themselves even things of common use. While the former now possessed artistically-prepared bedsteads, many of the latter did not have any; they slept on the bare ground. What the men of surplus called 'progress' turned out to be a condition of retrogression to the many. And quite reasonably, the latter argued that art and beauty had no doubt a place in man's march towards better living, but they should not be limited to the few, and that this would be possible only when the original mistake of accidental and forceful possessions was equitably remedied.

Art, in the way it was conceived and grew, ignored reason's challenge to chaos in man's behaviour which was motivated solely by self-interest. If the whole community was a store-house of manual and mental power, exerting itself for the service of one another, the utility of art would have been different. But since the chaos was persisting and



was only changing its form and shape, the surplus continued manifesting different ways of its utility, different ways of serving the self. The possessors of large surpluses were acquiring ever more numerous symbols of distinction, and were becoming a superior class. The most conspicuous among them was the headman, whose surplus was now the biggest. As the variety grew and art developed, he made himself appear as the most superior being in the community.

The community, that is, those who had the decisive voice, could meet again and change the headman, but if he had done nothing to deserve a sack and had performed his duties according to the instructions given him—according to the law—he could continue as long as he was alive or was physically fit to function. And when his son responded to his teaching and learnt to behave as a headman should, the headman's office became hereditary. The proper functioning of the headman and proper upbringing of his son, while worthy of admiration from the view-point of virtue, happened to be the largest single factor responsible for the accumulation of surplus. Never did any one of the people, who had appointed him, entertain the thought that he would become the richest man. But he was an institution now, and not only was his fortune tolerated with equanimity, he was looked upon with awe and extraordinary respect. The extra possessions and the unique comforts he had gathered had indeed imparted awe and respect to his personality.



## Chapter IV

### MYSTICISM vs. REASON

Could there be a better way than a law to check attacks on the 'inviolability' of possessions? The wise men among the settlers asked this question after the inviolability had been decided to be preserved with the force of law and after they had learnt from experience that violation—thieving, etc.—did not stop. They gave a new meaning to what was intended to be accomplished by law. They said man's deeds could be classified into two broad divisions, good and bad. In the context of the problem before them, bad conduct was one that violated the sanctity of possessions; the contrary was good conduct. Sanctimonious terms were later on employed to give expression to the idea: the former conduct was immoral, the latter virtuous. The idea gathered more flesh in the course of time and was presented in a more elaborate form.

The form was correlated with man's sense of wonder at the numerous manifestations of what he understood as nature. He had learnt from experience that rain was useful because without it his crops would dry up. But how was it, he asked himself, that sometimes, even in the rainy season, there was no rain or there was excess of it? Many were baffled by this phenomenon and discussed it with one another. There was no convincing reply. They were groping, and their inquiring quest had become so intense that they would avidly listen to any reply.

And a 'convincing' reply came from an elderly man held in high esteem. He said rain or its absence or its excess was a small phenomenon compared to the sun, moon, earth, and the innumerable things on earth. There was a supernatural power that had created them; it was not visible, but as the existence of the creation was a fact, so the existence of the supernatural power was a fact. The only difference between the two was that unlike the creation that power was not visible. Some called this power the Lord of the universe.

This reply, into which no thinking had gone and which, in fact, betrayed man's inability to think beyond how to utilise nature's creation for himself, was the starting point of what is called animism. Another elderly man



restricted his answer to the main question—about the uncertain nature of rains. He said as the Supreme Lord was the master of the universe, a lower agent of His was the master of rains ; and that when the agent was angry, he would either cause drought or pour out such excess of water that in either case, men would lose their crops. He prescribed certain methods to propitiate and appease the rain god. Again, no thinking had gone into this reply; it turned inquisitiveness into credulity, and left the inquirer less keen and mentally confused than he was before. He sought light, but was thrown into darkness. And what was amusing, he believed that he had been shown the light.

And why did the rain god get angry? Because men behaved in a bad way ; the 'light-giver' called the bad way a sin, whose reaction on the god could be removed only by propitiating him. If by chance, the rains came after a spell of drought and after the god had been propitiated, the 'light-giver' would be hailed with applause and his capacity to penetrate the realm of the unknown would be admired; he would even be adored. If the rains did not come, and if he was asked why the propitiation did not produce the desired result, he would be ready with an answer that would make the people sadder and himself look wiser: the sins must have been so enormous, so offensive, that the rain god's anger did not subside, and he did not relent. 'Don't you see,' he would say with emphasis, 'the habit of thieving is on the increase; virtue is being overshadowed by vice; therefore you cannot escape the result, the rain god's punishment.' The credulous again believed the elderly wise man, and allowed his sense of reason to be befogged by nonsense.

Against this background of the degeneration of man's mind, he was told what was moral or virtuous and what was immoral or sinful. Possessions were sacrosanct; this was morality. Violation of this sacrosanctity would bring the Supreme Lord's curse on the violator. Naturally afraid of pain and also wishful to avoid discomfort as far as possible, a man would set to think when he was told that if he violated the sanctity of possessions, he would have to suffer bodily torment or would be subjected by the unseen Power to any other ill-usage. Most men had experienced how painful was physical suffering—for example that caused by smallpox—and many shuddered to think of it attacking them as punishment for a sin. Sin was therefore to be avoided



—the avoidance would keep man free from physical pain and discomfort. But 'sin' did not stop. All that the sensible inquiry and its foolish answer produced was another class of idlers, who constituted themselves as men's preceptors to prescribe mystical remedies. It was not only an utterly useless class, but one that applied a brake to the growth of the rational mind. Like thieves, they became sharers, without any physical or mental exertion, in the surplus; and they passed off for men of virtue and morality, while the other idlers—the thieves—were dubbed as criminals. There was one noticeable difference between the two: these men of 'virtue' shared the fruits of labour of all and sundry, even of those who were poor and did not have enough to spare, while the thief oftentimes turned only to men of surplus for his victims.

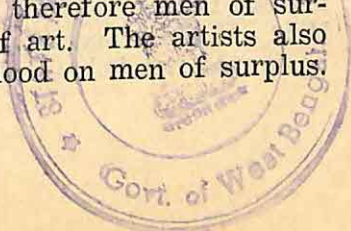
If mysticism could be created and exploited to give sanctity to the dubious character of possessions and if it could inveigle men's minds into accepting non-interference with them as a virtue, it could be invoked by the so-called evil-doers, thieves and others, also. And another class of idlers came up with their own devices to share in the gains the thieves made. The idlers' ingenuity produced another agent of supernatural power; it was the deity of forgiveness. Forgiveness could be won by propitiating the deity with a part of the booty acquired by thieving or other means tabooed by society. This diety too, like the gods and deities of virtue, was not visible, and the offerings made to it were appropriated by the idler. Thieving had not been stopped by the former form of mysticism, but it had mentally shaken many of the so-called criminals; the new form restored to them, in a large measure, the old mental attitude, which regarded the law as an affair exclusively concerned with the unmolested preservation of possessions and any breach of it was not to offend supernatural powers and had nothing to do with man's physical ailments. The mystique of vice was the answer to the mystique of virtue, but it did not restore to man that state of mind in which he asked rational questions: why should the accidental possessions be accepted as an accomplished fact? why was one excuse for living without work not as bad as another?

Fear, which had existed since the beginning of creation as part of man's biological inheritance, and which seemed to have been greatly diminished in the settled life, continued in one form or the other; it was



invoked even to enable 'virtue' to prevail. There was, it may be conceded for the sake of argument, some element of reason in the convention which prescribed non-interference with private possessions; but there was much less of it in the prescribed form of virtue, whose observance was sought by fear of the curse of the unseen Power. It was a retrograde device. In the days of the wandering life, men and animals feared each other, but had no fear of the unknown, unseen Power. Now virtue introduced men to a new sphere of fear. This was because unreason, instead of reason, had become the foundation of the structure of what was supposed to be a better human society in the making. If reason had become the foundation, virtue would have come to man as a wholly different challenge. The eldersmen, who invoked mysticism and fear, would, in that case, have discussed the problem of ensuring non-interference in a different way. They would have suggested that the tendency to crime arose from the tendency to make more surplus. They would have asked themselves the pertinent question: how far was the comfort-loving life at the root of the tendencies promoting crime? And they would have prescribed certain standards for the community to base non-interference on economic equality. Equitable distribution of the resources and compulsory work would have, in that case, been made the criterion of possessions, and avoidance of work made punishable. The law would have taken a different form, and the headman would have been behaving differently, instead of swelling his surplus and helping to promote criminal tendencies. There might have been thieving in this set-up also, but men would have taken the road of reason, and their minds would not have been vitiated by mysticism and fear.

As social life advanced, the terms good and bad were applied to different manifestations of social behaviour. Men of comparatively bigger possessions considered themselves superior to those of small possessions, and expected the superiority to be recognized by the latter; it was good to acknowledge this superiority and bad not to do so. A carpenter, who had trained himself to be an artist, was inferior to one who possessed a considerable amount of surplus to buy his produce. An artistic product was not an article of general utility. It was beyond the purchasing capacity of common people, and therefore men of surplus thought they were patrons of art. The artists also felt they depended for their livelihood on men of surplus.





The complex of superiority and inferiority became a custom, and those who showed by any gesture disregard for it were looked upon as lacking the sense of discrimination between good and bad.

The tradition which tied men to this behaviour was further strengthened by the association of mysticism, the unseen power which had created the world. Every creature and every lifeless thing owed its birth to the Supreme Lord, who made it what it was in accordance with certain system, and it was He who determined who among men would be superior and who inferior. It was therefore man's bounden duty to regard as sacrosanct not only disparity but all that was the consequence of disparity. This aspect of mysticism was presented with a proof: all men did not possess the same kind of physical and mental power, and some were superior to others. In the same way, in the matter of possessions, some were placed by the Creator in the position of superiority and some of inferiority. As the decades and centuries were passing, and men were becoming oblivious of the origin of the disparity, and as mysticism was getting deeply ingrained in their minds, they accepted what the 'wise men' said about the origin of superiority and inferiority and also the rule about good behaviour and bad behaviour. It was a virtue to bow before the Creator's order; and it was a sin not to do so.

In the growing list of virtues, the term truth appeared with a force which could be invoked to their aid both by men of surplus and by others. Its origin might be illustrated thus: The headman's agent, charged with the task of collecting the community's contributions for his fund, one day reported to him that such and such man had been incapacitated by illness and was not in a position to pay his contribution. The man was not actually ill but had, by paying a fraction of the contribution to the collector as bribe, devised a way of avoiding payment. The headman had the power of law to deal with the bribe-taking collector; but morality could also be invoked to play its part if only to ensure better results. The wise men developing a code of morality, therefore, laid down, again in the name of the Supreme Lord, that to speak truth (whose definition included honesty) was a virtue, and to speak untruth was a sin. Those who spoke truth pleased the Lord, and those who spoke untruth displeased Him. If the collector had this injunction fixed in his mind, he would not behave dishonestly because he must speak



truth for fear of punishment by the Lord.

Again, the psychological factor that motivated the collector to speak untruth and the bribing person to originate untruth was ignored. Both were impelled by the desire to have a little surplus with which they could get some of those things which made men of surplus superior or which could provide an extra amount of comfort. This desire was inherent in the system which was being preserved with all manner of devices, and could not be dispelled from the minds of some, while the others satisfied it and sanctified it with the law and virtue. Truth, therefore, could never become part of man's behaviour in the communal life. What actually happened was that untruth was presented so artfully that it assumed the appearance of truth and was accepted as such. The virtue lacked the force of reason to make men truthful and honest. On the contrary, the sub-conscious mind dictated that reason resided in the dishonest behaviour because it was consistent with the rule which gave opportunities to some to have considerable surplus and devote it to securing more comforts and acquiring superiority.

Men, the wise elders said, should be different from animals in their behaviour. Animals had seemingly no order; any of them would cause injury to or kill any other. But men should not injure one another; they should live in peace. To achieve this end, the wise men made a law empowering the headman to punish those whom he found guilty of violation of the law. And in this case also, morality in the garb of mysticism followed in the footsteps of the law. Whoever, the moral code prescribed, caused physical or mental injury to another, committed a sin, and departed from the way of virtue making himself liable to punishment by the Supreme Lord. Men had been causing injury to each other ever since they appeared on the earth for their self-interest, and if the wise elders declared such deeds unlawful or sinful, it was because, in the settled life, people had made themselves different from their old selves.

Some of these elders later on amended the law as also the moral code, providing that in self-defence a man could injure another. Self-defence included an attack on criminals—thieves, etc. But thieves were largely the product of a tradition, and had, as already discussed, their own priests, and their own mystic deities, which were regarded as giving them protection as far as possible in a mysterious way. But sometimes the virtuous and the law-



abiding caused injury to those who were not criminals according to the meaning of the law. For example, a servant of a cultivator of surplus possession was wrongly suspected of laziness and not giving the master the adequate return for the wages. The master got angry, and beat up the servant. Such cases would not go to the headman. In the first instance these were so petty, and in the second, a servant would not seek punishment for his master because he would not like to risk his means of livelihood by resorting to legal action. Morality usually stepped into such failures of law, and ordained that anger was a sin. If the element of mysticism be removed from this prescription, the new addition to the code of morality will have to be regarded as quite sensible, because it suggested a rational conduct. In the first place suspicion could not be a fair basis for a decision; and in the second, anger betrayed lack of self-control, and loss of self-control undid the achievement which made man different from animals. Self-control, whatever its virtuous content, appeared to many as a necessity, and they, compared to those who imbibed it purely as a virtue, applied it to their conduct more successfully. They learnt from experience that anger left behind an inimical feeling, and that the existence of such a feeling was not conducive to their self-interest. But whenever they talked about anger with other fellow men, they paraded it as a sin if only to maintain the mystical character of morality. They strongly believed that the fear of mystical vengeance was more powerful than reason to restrain man. The results were poor, and yet men stuck to the belief.

The wise elders were not accustomed to going into the causes of any evil. The men, who had become economically subservient to others, displayed another kind of anger, which did not always lead to violence. They complained among themselves of the heavy labour they had to put in to earn just enough to keep themselves alive. They got excited when they talked about those who with much less exertion lived in abundance; they abused them in their absence. This kind of anger was likely to produce discontent, and the wise men made yet another addition to the code of morality. They emphasised that every man's situation in life was ordained by fate: it was predetermined by the Lord, and since it was so, men must be contented with what they were. The wise men prescribed contentment as part of the essential qualities of a moral man. It was well nigh impossible to cover up the hollowness of the prescrip-



tion, and it did not work. The sceptical suggested that the morality of contentment must first be applied against the lust for more possessions and more comforts; if a level of contentment was fixed, it would have an inspiring effect on others, and the code of morality would then be a truthful approach.

Anger, studied in a different context, was one of the weaknesses of man's mind, and as such it did a positive harm not only to others but to himself also. A man was bitten by a mad dog, for example, and his anger was at once aroused to this extent that he gave a kick to the dog. The dog also reacted in the same manner and bit the man again. Both, the man and the dog, acted in a natural way, but the dog, who was firstly mad and secondly incapable of thinking, was excusable. The man, had he exercised control over the natural provocation, would have adopted one of these two courses: either he would have let the dog go, or if he thought that the dog must be killed, he would have given a heavy stick or stone blow on its head or back, or adopted some other way to kill it. This experience produced a lesson: the natural instinct of anger must be suppressed by the acquired wisdom of self-control. It meant that the mind should not be allowed to act according to impulses but must be trained with the prudence obtained from experience. This part of the analysis of anger and the prescription to check it was not the concern of the law nor of that morality which was considered supplementary to the law.

Self-control to suppress anger was like a possession which man needed for his self-interest, and if it was associated with the mysticism of virtue and sin, it was because mysticism had become the vehicle of sanctions for social conduct. It fitted in with the general approach to the maintenance of economic status quo in the community; any display of anger that disturbed the status quo directly or indirectly was a sin.

The order that the settled life had brought about had already created a sense of attachment in man's mind, and to him the dearest ones on the earth were his wife and children. But his own self-interest and his attachment towards his wife and children were likely to come in conflict; this was a conflict in which self-interest would nearly always assert itself against attachment. It betrayed the natural state of mind which was similar in man and animal. A cow would attack any one trying to separate her young one from her. But as the calf grew, she would



sometimes turn her horns against the calf while the two were eating grass from the same heap, her self-interest asserting itself against her attachment towards the offspring. If men and women in the settled life did not behave similarly, it was because they were in a favourable situation. Men, when they took to family life, had put themselves in possession of adequate resources to feed their wives and children. Man's superior mind, which provided him with the faculty to understand attachment, made a distinction between himself and animals. But if want or scarcity in some form supervened in the peculiar economy of the community, a man was likely to place his own self interest above that of his wife and children. He would even discriminate between himself and his dependents in the enjoyment of comforts. Such a behaviour was repugnant to the pattern of behaviour or the code of morality the wise men were formulating, and they suggested that man should get over this inherent weakness and treat his self and his wife and children on equal footing. They said it was his holy duty to do so; the Lord would be displeased if he behaved discriminately.

The code prescribed a reciprocal duty for the wife and children. Already the attachment was mutual; what the code did was, as in the case of the man, to check chances of circumstantial departure from the regard born of attachment. Additionally, the code prescribed wife and children's obedience to the head of the family. It was consistent with man's expectation, an expectation born of his consciousness that he was the bread-earner; he worked not only for himself but for them also. This expectation remained with him even when old age made him infirm and the working part of the family life shifted to the grown male children; the code sanctioned it. The code recognized the fact that it would be impossible for the old man, made by experience wiser than the children, to abandon the enjoyment of obedience; if his right to get obedience disappeared with the diminution of the working capacity of his limbs, he would be reduced mentally to a miserable state. One could not ignore in this tradition the noteworthy factor that the grown-up son was, by sticking to the tradition, ensuring obedience for himself in his old age.

The wise men proceeded further in regulating the family life. When they started laying down the code, the family was of course an established fact, but they noticed that often a husband and his wife made their life miser-



able by quarrels over their sex waywardness: they would not tolerate with equanimity one of them carrying on sex relation with another person. The wise men saw in the quarrelling the inner characteristic of man's mind which insisted on exclusiveness. They again invoked morality and the Supreme Lord, and declared violation of fidelity a sin. But man's consciousness of himself as the supporter and protector of the family asserted itself in many cases, particularly of men possessing an abundance of surplus; they would not tolerate a breach of fidelity on the part of their wives, but themselves they would violate it with equanimity. Often, the wife submitted to the man's immoral conduct, but she did so in sheer helplessness, a helplessness which she would ward off only if she had found another man to go to. But how could she be oblivious of the broad fact that there also the man occupied the same position of superiority. Even the wise men were compelled to recognise this superiority. They amended the code, and permitted plurality of wives, but did not permit plurality of husbands. In the far-flung settlements, the family life developed in a variety of ways, and where women possessed the position of superiority over men, the code accepted plurality of husbands. In either case, the morality, it will have to be admitted, was compromised. Nevertheless, the concept of fidelity and the urge for its observance in the name of morality or for fear of offending the Lord, had come to stay.

The men of surplus turned the code to their advantage. With their surplus, they were able to keep more than one wife, and excited the envy of those less fortunate. Fidelity thus became to a great extent, a phenomenon of helplessness. There were, of course, men and women who faithfully and completely imbibed the injunction, and regarded departure from it a sin. They were the real makers of the tradition of fidelity. They belonged to the economically less fortunate class, and did not avail themselves of the relaxation which allowed plurality of wives. The men of surplus, on the other hand, were devising new methods to benefit by the relaxation. The relaxation was a departure from the spirit of the original injunction, and they interpreted it more liberally: if man was permitted to have more wives than one, it meant that he could have sex relation with more women than one, and therefore it was not necessary that the women should all become his wives. They put the interpretation into practice, and the result, in a nutshell, was the coming into existence of a new class, the class of prostitutes.



It was a horrible challenge to the whole concept of sex morality. If men of surplus thought of making sex a purchasable commodity, some women made it a saleable commodity and a means of acquiring surplus. The community had now a new profession, which provided new chances to men shirking physical exertion; they helped the prostitutes in carrying on their 'business', and got a part of their 'earnings'. The area of the evil was fast expanding, and even some of those who had no surplus to spare for the market women broke the code of fidelity. They did so by neglecting their wives and children, thus violating another moral prescription—discharging their responsibility towards the dependents.

Even in the wandering state, man had some sense of discernment as to what facial features were more attractive than others, and he made use of that sense in choosing his sex mate, if the opportunity of choosing was available to him. In the settled state, his appreciation for beauty grew, but it was not easy to have a free choice. Often it was a chance that brought together a man and a woman as husband and wife, and as soon as they were united, the code of morality applied to them, and the sense of fidelity was expected to put an end to the attraction for beauty in another person. But the sense of appreciation of beauty could not be eliminated by any code, and it was impliedly understood that appreciation should not be allowed to be extended to physical enjoyment. It was no easy restraint, but it was realized that the coming into being of the relationship of husband and wife itself called for restraint, and if that relationship was to be maintained properly, the appreciation could be allowed to go only up to that point where it would not disturb the institution of married life. But the emergence of the sex business threw out a challenge to the code: beauty had become a purchasable commodity. Some beautiful women, who had been leading married life were, being in a minus-surplus state, attracted to the desire of buying comforts. They abandoned the family life, and took to the sex business. In some cases, they were enticed away by the male aids of the business.

As time passed, the sex business was regarded as providing shelter to women in distress, for example, widows who became destitute after the death of their husbands. In their cases, as in other cases generally, the inadequacy of the law and the code of morality was largely to blame. Both forms of restraints ignored the causes that persuaded or compelled ambitious or helpless women to take to the



business. The law and the code did not deal with the evil arising out of the surplus and multiplying with every new provision added to the code. The law and the code did not take notice of the obvious problem that the distressed should be considered a charge on the community.

The wise men, however, did not admit defeat, and thought of a remedy. They said human beings should be merciful to each other, and those in better circumstances should help those in distress. Charity thus appeared as a new provision in the code of morality. It was made a virtue, a virtue that would please the Supreme Lord, who would reward those who practised it. The conception was again mystical. It fostered the expectation that those practising charity would get, in the Lord's mysterious way, greater opportunities to add to their surplus; the code-makers themselves said, those who provided relief to men and women in distress would be happier, that is, they would automatically get access to more comforts. They said charity would ennoble those who practised it. But the result was that charity made them prouder and added to their sense of superiority, and it humiliated those to whom it was done. The wise men had believed that the prescription would be accepted as a provision of general practice; their hope was belied and the scope of charity always remained reduced to one's option.

Charity and mercy were two manifestations of the same concept, and the moral demand for their practice grew and was responded to at men's option. Charity and mercy became separate moral prescriptions; there could be mercy without charity. A boy, for example, had been injured by a falling tree, and was unable to walk home unaided. A passerby saw him but ignored him. The knowledge of this spectacle made wise men exert their minds, and they laid down that mercy was as much part of morality as charity; if the passerby could not get the boy's wounds dressed up at his own cost, he could at least help him reach home. If this help had not been made part of mysticism and had not been connected with mysterious dispensation of the Supreme Lord, the purpose would have been better served. There was in mercy, as in charity, an element of obligation and therefore of humiliation. If it were impressed on man's mind that to help one in distress was an aspect of the barter system, that element could be precluded. The return in this aspect of the barter was not immediate, but there might be an occasion when the helper would himself need



help, and he might be helped by some one, if not by the same boy. The wise men chose to call material and physical help charity and mercy because their minds were preoccupied with the unjust economy of the community. They could think of charity and mercy only by man of affluence towards the poor and the weak; they could not think of an arrangement under which a sense of social duty with a sense of social equality, could develop, because such a thought would not fit in with social and economic superiority and inferiority that had been made part of the community's life and imparted sanctity to by the code of morals.

It can be argued that charity and mercy were only the moral terms given to what man had already been doing. His attachment with his family, then with those who had had contact with him, and then even with animals domesticated by him, was not a cultivated quality; it resulted from his close association with them. This attachment imparted importance to his natural impulse of helping a man or animal out of distress. The natural impulse should have, in the settled life, grown to a dimension and to a point of discipline, where a moral prescription would have been unnecessary. But in the settled life, the natural impulse received a setback. Time was when a man's surplus did not hold out the prospect of getting a variety of comforts; it was as a matter of course that he parted with a part of it to feed a hungry man. Now the surplus had a purchasing capacity, and made man more selfish. What formerly he did almost spontaneously, now required the persuasion of a moral code. And what formerly he did generally, was now optional despite the belief put into his mind of rewards coming to him in a mysterious way.



## Chapter V

### A PERVERTED CIVILIZATION

Hundreds of years had elapsed since men began to live a settled life. Their needs were growing and they had evolved a kind of regulated life. They called the changes they had brought about civilization. But wandering life had not yet wholly disappeared; and many settlements gave a pretty dim view of 'progress'. Both these were looked down upon by 'civilized' men. Geographical and climatic conditions largely helped the growth of civilization. The settlements in fertile plains had more favourable conditions to grow to civilization than their counterparts in mountainous regions. If man in the plains had shown superior wisdom by making fireburnt earthen pots, it was because he had around him smooth, sticking earth, free from stone chips. This material was not available to men living in mountains or in sandy regions.

Men of the plains thus got a better footing to build their civilization on. They first built themselves mud houses. The sun dried the mud and rendered the houses habitable; but the rains considerably undid what the sun had done. And they got an idea. If the earthen pots could be made unmeltable by burning, so could the mud used for making the house walls, and they learnt making bricks. But to make earthen bricks and then to burn them required so much labour and wood that it called for a lot of surplus, and only the men possessing it could afford to give themselves brick houses. They made use of the idea and hired less fortunate men not only to make bricks but also to construct houses for them. When earth was available in plenty and man had known how to make bricks, why should he not live in a better house? He did it and was proud that his living was better than that of the men in the mountain. He called himself civilized compared to them. But he was deceiving his sense of reason, as he had been constantly doing in the past. Those who prepared the bricks and made houses for men of surplus still lived in mud huts because with the wages paid to them, they could not accumulate so much surplus as could enable them to have brick houses. These poor people presented a ludicrous study of the civilization. Some of them,



by the application of their mental faculty, improved upon brick-making and also introduced artistic designs in house-building. They possessed an aptitude for promoting the arts, but were also motivated by the ambition to earn more than their fellow labourers did so that they might have a little surplus. Their ambition was fulfilled to a certain extent, but not many of them were in a position to possess brick houses.

The civilization of brick houses created a more conspicuous distinction between men of surplus and others; it led to segregation of the latter and exposed the true character of the civilization. Mud houses in the neighbourhood of brick houses appeared as an eyesore to the latter's owners, and they either purchased the former's lands for somewhat attractive prices or seized them on one pretext or the other. In some cases, the poor did not find the neighbourhood congenial. Men of nearly the same means therefore chose to live together, and there were, in the course of time, settlements of mud houses and settlements of brick houses. The former came to be called villages and the latter towns. The civilization in this contrast stood exposed in its utter nakedness. If the village was, according to the accepted meaning of civilization, in a much less civilized state than the town, it was not due to a lack of mental and physical effort; it was due to the peculiar way in which the economic life had been conducted. Was it not possible for every man of a settlement to have a brick house? It was, but the men of surplus would not let every man benefit by the new device. The size of a brick house depended upon the capacity of one's surplus; and there were men who provided themselves with several-room houses, each member of the family getting a room all to himself. There were others whose houses contained fewer rooms. (Those who could not give themselves even the smallest brick house are out of the consideration here.) The change from mud houses to brick houses, as it was being carried out, was not a co-operative effort of the community moving hand-in-hand to a new stage in human progress—to brick civilization—but was made a means of rare comfort to men of surplus. And to add insult to injury, the moral code was invoked to keep the actual builders of brick houses in a mental state of equanimity! They were told that man, to be good, should not vitiate his mind by envy and should remain contented with his lot. Man was ceaselessly applying his mind to thinking how best to exploit the natural resources, but the fruit of such



thinking was largely appropriated by men of surplus. The change-over from earthen pots to metal utensils was a great advance, and could be claimed as a big step on the road to civilization, but the traditional economic set-up did not permit the use of the new invention to economically inferior people, and there remained between them and the men of surplus a distance of thousands of years. Both set out on the journey leading to civilization at the same time, but the one was regarded as being still in the uncivilized state, while the other was acclaimed as civilized. The difference did not make men of surplus ashamed of themselves; they did not pause to think that they were themselves responsible for the large pockets of 'uncivilized' people in their midst. On the contrary, they took pride in belonging to a superior class, in being distinguished as men of civilization.

It was possible, in the traditional economic set-up, for the children of the first inventor of metal to be impoverished to the extent of retiring to the village life and being compelled to return to earthen pots. Thus the children of the man who made a distinct contribution to civilization came to be treated as belonging to uncivilized society. Circumstances often caused such economic downgrading and upgrading: a man of surplus would become a pauper, and a pauper would rise to the position of a man of surplus. The former was not rendered pauper by lack, on his part, of physical and mental effort; nor did the latter owe his rise to an extra effort. Surplus-making depended on certain devices, called opportunities in common parlance. And the degeneration to pauperism was either the result of the failure of devices or their ineffectiveness.

What were these devices? As the community life was expanding, more men were getting, in fact creating, opportunities to substitute cosy professions for strenuous work. The barter system had disappeared, and coins had been made the means of exchange. With coins possessing the purchasing power, men ambitious to accumulate surplus applied their minds to thinking how to acquire more coins. One of the easy ways they thought of was to act as middle men between different producers. They would buy, for example, corn from the tillers and sell it to consumers at higher prices than what they had paid. The middlemen's work at first involved some physical exertion—they had to carry the corn load on their head or exert themselves to some extent even when they used pack animals. But as time passed, both the producers and the retail buyers be-



came accustomed to using the new agency, and the middle men were relieved of the little physical exertion they had to undergo. The producers now themselves carried their produce to the middle men, and the middle men, assured of their inevitable role in the communal life, gradually increased their margin of profit. A middleman's place in society should have been inferior to that of the producer, but he had made himself richer than most of them, and was conceded a superior status. With his big surplus he gave himself a big brick house, so big that with the material and labour spent on it, twenty poor men would have each got a one-room house. And he gave himself so many metal utensils as would have enabled twenty poor men to abandon earthen pots and qualify themselves to be called civilized.

Some of these middlemen, having accumulated an abundant amount of surplus, hit upon a better device to make easy money. Their contact with corn producers acquainted them with the latter's difficulties and privations, one of which was persistent lack of money. The lack was aggravated when there was drought or flood, and they were faced with the want of seed for the next crop. So the richer middlemen started the moneylending 'business'; they began to advance money to the needy at high rates of interest. Needless to say that it was the same money that they had made as profit from the producers. The moneylenders paraded themselves as a benevolent class and were plausibly accepted as such because without their 'help', the distress-hit producers would have been compelled to deny themselves the next crop and driven to starvation. The decades and centuries that had passed since the middlemen came into existence obliterated from the producers' mind the feeling—whatever amount of it they had in the beginning—that it was, in fact, the system of the middlemanship that deprived them of the little surplus which they could utilize in times of distress.

The devices like this exposed the true character of the civilization more pathetically. While the men of surplus were acquiring a larger amount of things that were emblems of civilization, the poor were being thrown deeper into darker periods of 'uncivilized' life: the interest added to the middlemen's profits compelled the producers to part with a larger amount of their produce and what was left with them was so inadequate for themselves and their families that they had sometimes to resort to the an-



cient habits of eating leaves, roots, etc. The thousands of years of the settled life were threatened to be undone, and the poor were again on the verge of the ancient state of the wandering life when, failing to get relishable eatables, they turned to anything they could get to satisfy their hunger.

In the indebtedness, whose volume increased with more calamities befalling the producers, there was always a chance of the ability to return the money with interest even in instalments not coming to them for a number of years. Such chances were not rare, and the money-lender thought of another device. He made the return of the loan with interest within a fixed period a condition of lending. The condition also stipulated that if the borrower failed to honour the contract, the lender would seize a part of the borrower's land. A 'system' of 'regulating' the life of the community was evolved by the money-lenders, and the headman made a law to give effect to the contract. Perhaps it did not occur to the poor—corn-producers and others—that if a law was made to enforce a contract between two individuals, there should also be a law to regulate the economic relationship between the producers and middlemen, to set a limit on latter's profits.

Even if it occurred to them, their demand, which was the same as that which proposed equitable distribution of land at an early stage of the settled life, would not be accepted. The law-makers, instead of saving the producer of the principal necessity of life from a state of misery, helped his exploiter, and made civilization a thing of private possession of the few.

With the new device, the money-lenders brought into being a new economic factor; the land under cultivation which belonged exclusively to those who tilled it now began to be made private property of a non-producing class. Formerly, the producers paid interest for a certain period; now they would pay an annual rent for all times to come, and would be ejected if they failed to make regular payment. For the first time, the producer was placed in the risk of being thrown out of his means of livelihood, and this with the active help of law.

The money-lenders and middlemen ascended to a higher economic status than that of many possessors of surplus among the cultivating class (who were the originators of the surplus class) and were envied by them. But the ancient possessors would not entertain an idea of some



kind of equitable economy because they still occupied a favourable position compared to the less fortunate cultivators. Therefore the sense of equity was what the law defined, and the law protected the acquisition of surplus by what were termed as honest means. It was perfectly 'honest' for the middleman and the money-lender to enjoy the result of a device by which they appropriated to themselves a substantial portion of the fruit of the sweat-labour of the producer.

This development in the economic life of the community was hailed as a great step in the evolution of civilization. A body of laws were framed and a body of men possessing adequate ability to administer them correctly were appointed. It was these men's sacred duty to see to it that justice was done. The man whose land was claimed by the money-lender consequent on his failure to discharge his debt would be given a fair chance to have his say before the judge, and would be required to give up his title only after the judge had fully satisfied himself that the complainant's claim was legally tenable. The judges, regarded as one of the main pillars of the civilized society, never paused to think that they were maintaining by law a system based on self-aggrandising devices. In fact, the remuneration paid to the judges placed them in the class of men of surplus. The system in which they were born and lived made their minds prisoner of the traditional economy and law, and there was no room to think whether confirming by law a proceeding based on an inequitable economic device could be called justice.

Now the town started giving itself what became known as civic amenities. Muddy passages between different houses caused inconvenience to the residents, and it was proposed that they should be paved with bricks. But where was the money to come from for such a huge project? The community decided that every household should pay a certain sum, and adequate amount should be raised to construct good roads. The decision was implemented, and in some months, the muddy passages became paved roads. But there was a noteworthy difference between this performance and the co-operative effort of the early settled life. When men first provided themselves with shelters of mud houses and thatched roofs, they pooled their physical efforts and by this mutual co-operation they provided themselves with the first necessity in the settled life. In the progress from that stage to the metal-



led roads, the system of the co-operative way had considerably changed. Physical effort was now a commodity, whose value was measured with money, and therefore the amount required for the roads was estimated, and then each household was asked to pay its share. Those who had no surplus to contribute for the community work, would have to borrow. In fact, in the present state of the settled life, men lacking surplus had the main role to play. There were men of unsettled means in a settled society, and when the road project was undertaken, they were gathered together to work on it and earn their daily wages.

In what was supposed to be uncivilized state, all those who wanted houses would have to help one another with their physical mite; now, in the days of civilization, the device of money contribution saved many from physical exertion. It was a system in which a public work of convenience and comfort to everybody would be constructed with the sweated labour of only those who were poor because of that system. In the new co-operative way, often a man working on the project was one who paid his contribution from money borrowed from a money-lender. Thus he not only contributed physical effort on behalf of the money-lender, but also added (with the interest) to his surplus. And when the roads were ready, they were made greater use of by the non-working men plying their carts over them than the toilers who did not possess vehicles and who could rightly complain that if the roads were restricted to foot traffic, they would last longer.

Whatever the system, the community made a new addition to what constituted civilization, but as in the case of brick houses, metal utensils, etc., the town got roads, while the village had to deny itself this amenity because its people did not possess adequate economic capacity to undertake such a stupendous project. Society was being divided roughly into two classes: on the one side were those who produced with their toil the most essential need of men—food—and yet lived a frugal life; and on the other were those who by different devices exacted a substantial amount of the produce and made their life more civilized, that is, more comfortable. It was a civilization in which reciprocity of the barter system was gradually disappearing. That system too had inherited the tradition of surplus, but under it the things exchanged usually represented labour of the respective parties. The surplus was then partly stored in the form of goods—corn etc.—and partly converted into comfort-giving possessions; under



this system, ambition moved slowly because corn could not be kept in store for a long time and the capacity to store was not limitless; and conversion of the surplus into things of comfort was confined to the limited variety of things available. But the metallic money brought about a revolutionary change. There was now a new thinking about surplus: it could be accumulated in any quantity and lent on interest. Thus the exploiting civilization of metallic money replaced the barter system in which one's labour was money; it was a replacement of honesty by dishonesty. Yet the code of morality tolerated it with equanimity; nay it extended the concept of sanctity to the wealth made from exploitation, and the law, as usual, punished those who violated the code.

Every new addition to the constituents of civilization was putting an additional burden on the producers of essential commodities without a corresponding addition to their convenience and comforts. On the contrary, often a new class came up, adding to their physical exertion. For example, if one of the three working members of a peasant family withdrew from cultivation and went over to a little more remunerative occupation of utensil-making or road-building, the remaining two members would have to do the work which was formerly done by three. The inventive or creative faculty of man's mind was largely employed for making new things of comfort for those who possessed surplus, and was not applied to devising new methods by which the quantum of physical exertion could be reduced and the work of three men could be done by two.

Among man's essential needs, cloth was next to food. It was the covering of body with cloth that distinguished the civilized man from one of the presettled life who used animal skins to protect himself from cold. It is not known who invented the making of fibre from cotton or from sheep hair; possibly the inventor was one of the cultivating class. Sitting in a thicket, he may have been attracted to the plant bearing soft white blooms, and he plucked one of them. Then, he may have stretched it with his fingers and gathered the idea that something useful could be made by twisting it into a thin long thread. He persisted in his experiment, and by intersecting two threads, he weaved a rough piece of cloth. More men of researchful bent of mind may have carried his experiment a step further each time and their application eventually produced the spinning wheel and weaving tools.

For many years, spinning and weaving, in a rough



style, was a family affair, and figured rarely in the barter market. But after metallic money had come into operation and facilitated bulky accumulation of surplus, cloth was made one of the principal saleable commodities. Later, the invention of needle enabled the stitching of cloth into fit garments. The invention of cloth and its sartorial outfit occupy a top place in the ladder of civilization. Usually the uncivilized state and the civilized state of man are presented by a contrast between two pictures. In one is shown an ugly man with a piece of skin tied round his loins; and in the other, the man's entire body excepting the face is covered by several pieces of tailored cloth. The pictures represent the long journey man has covered since he took to the settled life; but it does not depict the whole truth. Even after cloth had reached its present evolutionary stage, the picture depicting the precivilized man continued to exist in nearly the same form.

The spinners and weavers sprang from the class of poor peasants, and they opted for the new profession because it required less physical exertion. Their former place in the economic life of the community determined the wages of their labour; and their living standard was no better than that of their erstwhile class. As the demand for cloth increased and as more men became conscious of the comparatively easy-going life of the profession, an element of competition came into play, and the wage rate went down further. The inevitable result was that many spinners and weavers had a very small quantity of their product left for themselves. Some had only a small piece of cloth round their loins, and some were able to cover their chest and back also frugally. The taste for beauty is an inborn attribute in man, and different men according to the resourcefulness of their minds developed different varieties of art work in the manufacture of cloth, making civilization look richer. But like the ordinary men of their profession, they too were prisoners of the dominant surplus; the beneficiaries of the keen and diligent application of mind, devoted to preparing artistic designs, were men of abundant surplus, while the artists themselves as also their wives and children used rough cloth. They were the creators of art, but amusingly enough, the wearers passed as men of fine taste and promoters of civilization.

As in foodgrains and other things, the middleman appeared between the cloth manufacturers and consumers also, and he spread his net of business far and wide. In the numerous parts of the world, the varieties of land pro-



duce differed from region to region; and in many cotton was unknown. To such parts as were accessible or within his means to reach, the middleman despatched supplies of cloth, and multiplied his profits. He called himself adventurous, and thus justified his profits. By implication, he meant that the cloth producer lacked wisdom and prudence and therefore should be contented with his lot. This was self-deception. The middleman had put himself in possession of surplus by exploiting peasants and manufacturers, and with the help of pack animals and carts he organised export business. He asserted that at one time he was a petty peasant himself, and that if he occupied a place among men of surplus, it was because he possessed a better mind and consequently better organizing capacity. He also claimed that men of better minds had turned primitive society into civilized society. Civilization, as we have already discussed, was not promoted by his class, but by common people. In fact the business organization abused civilization by prostituting it for profit and by mischievously depriving its real promoters of their rightful due.

Man's mind was constantly keeping aloof from reason. Civilization was unfolding itself spontaneously, and the wise men who laid down laws and morals did not care to penetrate into details of the economic life. If they did, they would have easily discovered facts that would have challenged the so-called civilized age. With the depletion of the man power engaged in agriculture, the volume of work load on land workers was, as already stated, increasing. Before this state appeared, men and women did the spinning in their spare time and got just enough yarn to clothe the family frugally. The fleecers like the middleman and the money-lender did not exist, and the spinners were in a position to enjoy the fruit of their labour. But now a substantial portion of the family's agricultural produce was taken away by the fleecers, and the family was compelled to spin for men of surplus; they had to pass on the earning they made from spinning to the middleman and the money-lender. A law or at least a moral code was called for to stop the institution of fleecers, but such a thought was never entertained, and civilization continued to be reduced more and more to mockery as it progressed.

The invention of writing, another constituent of civilization, played the same role. Leading men of the community, including the headman or king's administrative staff, middlemen and money-lenders, all felt called upon, as the number of people they had to deal with increased,



to keep an account of every individual. How much money had been collected from contributors to the community fund or from borrowers and how much remained to be collected could not be remembered, and the account keeper fixed some signs to help him maintain an account of the balance. These signs, with changes warranted by experience made in them, became numerals. Signs were similarly fixed for consonants and vowels so that names of different individuals could be written against the account of each. The accounts were first written on walls until some one suggested wooden planks or paper-like skins of certain trees to be used for the purpose. Paper was invented a long time later.

The art of writing was in the course of time put to multitudinous use by man. The oral laws were written down, and their framers and administrators got a sense of precision. The wise men, who had for ages been making their spoken language rich and had given attractive expressions to morals and used to learn by heart the expressions they inherited from their forefathers, now prepared a written code. They presented it to the people with greater authority, and their successors, after centuries had rolled by, imparted more sanctity to it by telling the credulous that it was the work of the Supreme Lord Himself, or it was prepared by men who were in communication with Him. Already those who had moral expression at the tip of their tongue enjoyed the tradition of being treated as superior men. The superiority was readily conceded by people who were incapable of giving similar demonstration of retentive memory; and now they were looked upon as learned in the code, and were listened to with respect as its interpreters. They constituted a distinct class and were called priests. Exploiting the common people's extraordinary regard for them, they withdrew from physical exertion completely, and devised different ways of living on others' labour. Having made the people susceptible to mysterious powers of the Supreme Lord and afraid of those powers, they declared that they were in communion with the Lord, and that their interpretations of the Code were the interpretations of the Lord Himself. They laid down mysterious ceremonies which, they prescribed, should be performed through them by men needing solace or redress from difficulties. The priests ensured in this way unearned money for themselves, and like the money-lender went on increasing their rates until they were able to rank with men of sizeable surplus.



The unending holiday from work, however, gave them opportunities (even when writing was not invented) to devote themselves to thinking. They observed that the moon appeared in the sky only for a certain number of days, and then disappeared, and appeared again for the same number of days. And they said to themselves that the moon must be a moving planet. The fact that it was a moving planet had little to do with the working man; what was of use to him was the discovery that the period of moonlight and the period of darkness could together be regarded as constituting a certain definite period of time, and they called it month. They made observation and studied the planets, and arrived at certain conclusions. It will be irrelevant to the present study to give an elaborate idea of their work and its results; it is enough to say that they intelligently satisfied man's inquisitiveness about the natural phenomena around and above him. But the question that is very much relevant to the study is whether complete abandonment of physical exertion was a prerequisite to the observation and to acquiring the knowledge they had gathered. Even those replying in the affirmative will find themselves confronted with another question: whether the lust for surplus, with no limit set on it, was also a prerequisite to the attainment of the knowledge, and whether mystical and mysterious performances were the only means the priests could think of to earn their bread and accumulate surplus?

The study of the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth indicated man's urge to be precise. Therefore it could be safely inferred that the priests or others of like attitudes were capable of applying their minds to a precise study of economic phenomenon in which the producers of wealth and promoters of civilization were left in squalor and non-working people were becoming the beneficiaries of prosperity and civilization. But such application was restrained by the circumstances of the thinking priests. Their self-interest was the first concern of their existence, and the study leading to formulation of knowledge was a secondary issue. The first concern could be served by leaning more towards men of surplus than towards the poor, and by maintaining an economic system in which surplus was upheld the order; they never bothered about its unjust manifestations. Their own selfish and easy-going existence depended on the unholy alliance between men of surplus and themselves.



Like other constituents of civilization, writing, as a thing of utility, was largely the monopoly of men of surplus, and that part of it which became known as learning was exclusively the monopoly of makers and interpreters of the moral code. Writing was, for many centuries, principally used as a vehicle for conveying the instructions of the moral code and knowledge of things strange to the general mass of people. And since this learning was the pillar supporting the existence of a distinct class, its rarity was jealously maintained with a view to preserving the class. The priests frowned upon any tendency that held out a possibility of men of non-priestly classes acquiring proficiency in the code and knowledge of things astronomical; that class, in fact, would not admit for education boys of others classes.

The invidious exclusion did not annoy rich people who had their own reasons for disinterestedness in the so-called higher education. Why should they go in for it, they said, when discharging of the obligations arising from the moral and mystical codes had been undertaken by the priests in consideration of certain fees. All that rich men's sons needed to learn was alphabet and figures so that they could maintain business accounts. For this, a few schools were opened. They were just a few because the civilization of reading and writing was not to be made universal. It was bound to be confined to the children of men of surplus because the boys of poor families were yoked to physical exertion at a tender age so that they might supplement the family income. Most people of the community therefore remained unlettered, relics of the precivilized days, and only a few secured the title to be called civilized.

The invention of the art of writing created further complications in the economic life of many a poor, while it provided men of surplus with further opportunities for accumulating unearned money. A money-lender, for example, found while going into the accounts of his borrowers that many had not paid the interest regularly, and he got an idea: the unpaid interest should be added to the principal and this device would get him more interest. This involved a little complicated calculating, which was beyond the ability of the illiterate borrower, who had to honour whatever demand the lender put forward. And there were occasions when the lender inflated his demand in the belief that the borrower was incapable of presenting a corrected account. Men of letters and figures thus often used their



latest acquisition to making themselves richer, and put the new invention of civilization to shame. As already stated, the so-called learned men, the priests, were doing the same thing in a different way.

Mysticism too developed its scope with the help of writing. As the learned men thought more about the incomprehensible phenomena of nature, they grew more convinced of the belief, given them by their forbearers, that the Supreme Lord was the controller of every manifestation of nature. The dead also set them a thinking: what happened to the spirit of man that gave him for many years energy to work and to show his mental prowess in different ways. As long as a man breathed, his body did not putrefy and did not decompose; but as soon as he ceased breathing, he would become a still, putrefying heap. And they said to themselves there was something which kept man alive and when that thing was gone, man was dead. They called that thing Spirit, and, in the absence of a rational answer, they declared that the Spirit was given and taken away by the Supreme Lord. They would not believe that a thing that had the capacity to make man work and talk and give the subconscious mind the impression of ever-lastingness, like the sun, the moon, the stars, could perish. And they said the Spirit was permanent and ever-lasting; the Lord put it into a creature for a certain period and recalled it when that period was over. The phenomenon of life and death had created inquisitiveness, and the learned found an answer according to their traditional approach.

When the inquisitiveness was aroused, there was no intention of connecting the answer with man's deeds, good and bad. But afterwards the priests saw in the answer a powerful point to enrich the code of morality. The past and present of man's behaviour was before their eyes; they knew that the fear of the Lord's wrath descending upon the evil-doer did not restrain many men from sinful actions, and they knew the reason also: a sinful act was not always followed by physical ailment or mental distress or monetary loss. Sin therefore did not abate, and called for a stronger remedy in the name of the Lord. Now that they had a new thought—the coming of the Spirit from the Lord and its eventual return to Him—they proclaimed that sin might escape punishment in this world, but it was bound to be punished by the Lord. The man, after he was dead, would appear before the Lord in the form of his spirit, and be taken to task by Him. They made a vision of the Lord's



punishments, and put an elaborate picture of it before the people. They reduced the idea to writing, and men now had a bigger moral code. By the new thought, the priests added to their stature as super men, and assumed the role of determining what was sin and what was virtue. Men whose sense of fear was aroused by the apprehension of punishment after death often went to the priest with a part of their hard-earned money to seek his advice. And the priest getting more conscious of the new money-making device, suggested remedies and gave prescriptions that meant additional income to him.

Thus his own avarice undid the new thought even if punishment after death was a fact. Rich men made him their preceptor, and he avidly accepted the honour. Whatever the value of the thought, whatever its potentialities to check commission of bad deeds, it was utilized to strengthening the tradition of economic inequality. The thought-givers never intended to apply the new dispensation to performances of exploitation which had become customary in society; like the previous prescriptions, this one also recognized the sanctity of exploitation.

Incidentally, morality began to be dilated upon elaborately when detachment, a pre-requisite to right thinking, was considerably vitiated by the association of the thinking to produce morals with the tendency to earn without physical exertion and make surplus to buy comforts. The inclination to evolve a moral life came up with all honesty, but self-interest diverted it into a wrong direction, and blinded man to such an extent that he would not see any wrong in it.

And man proceeded to make further gains for civilization with a perverted mind. A borrower, for example, failed to pay on demand the interest and principal to the lender, and the latter, asserting his right to get back his money, asked the former to part with his cow, the cow whose milk was used to feeding the young children. The demand being legal, had to be honoured and the man had to surrender his cow. The lender in this way came in possession of a dozen cows, and paraded himself as richer than many others of his class. What would he do with a large amount of extra milk? He put it to different uses, which came to be known as the uses of a civilized society. He turned some of it into curd, some into cream, some into butter, some into sweets by reducing it to the condensed form. These varieties, a constituent of civilization, he got by depriving the children of the borrowers of what had



come to be regarded as essential food for young ones. Although his action appeared as violation of the morals of mercy and charity, it was upheld by the law and even by morality, because he did nothing immoral in collecting his dues. The learned looked at the happening with equanimity; nay they rejected the consideration for mercy by asserting that if mercy was allowed to tamper with justice, the even tenor of social life would be disturbed and eventually the borrower would have to suffer because then the lender would refuse to lend. The answer would have been different if the problem had been studied with a just, detached mind. The cow-owning borrower was a victim of a chaotic, unjust system which was being preserved with the diabolical force of law.

Why, it might be asked, did the sufferers in the unjust order, not assert themselves with their physical might, and why, on the contrary, they quietly submitted to it? It is a pertinent question especially in view of the fact that in the beginning of the settled life those who felt inequity in the establishment of private possessions over free gifts of nature had given fight to the settlers. Subsequently the settlers organized themselves into a more powerful front, and against the unorganized wanderers, they proved numerically superior. But in the period to which the question refers, the sufferers were more numerous than the other side, and therefore apparently capable of changing by force the entire social structure that accounted for their excessive exertion on the one hand and miseries on the other.

The answer is easy. As already hinted, for thousands of years, an elaborate paraphernalia of laws, moral codes, mystical explanations of the unintelligible phenomena, metagnostic beliefs, had been in operation stultifying the sense of reasoning. Man had ceased to argue rationally; he did not display even as much reason as his wanderer successor had done, and his mind continued to be trained to submit to the things as they were and as they were developing with every supposed development of civilization. He had been given one word to silence all his questions pertaining to himself. That word was fate. It was fate that had determined for him the station he occupied in life. If the money-lender made him miserable, it was because such an action was destined to take place according to the will of the Supreme Lord. To question that will or to act in any manner against it was to question the inscrutable ways of the Lord. Oppressed by the burden of fear, the mind



refused to summon the physical strength to fight exploitation. There was no sense of exploitation; it was all a game of fate.

This fear was intensified by the fear of the force behind the law. Different products of civilization had made this force much different from the physical force of early times; it was capable of beating away more numerous challengers. With the money made available to the administrative agency by the surplus economy, the force was equipped with weapons, which the poor could not buy. The weapons represented a marked improvement on the rough sticks or stones with which men fought in wandering life as also in the early periods of the settled life, and were therefore paraded as a constituent of civilization. Before the general mass of people were convinced of the power of the civilized force, there were fights now and then between groups of defiant people and the organized force of the administrative authority, but as defeat of the former was nearly always the result of the conflicts, the fear of that force was more effective than the actual use of it. This fear assumed, in the course of centuries, the form of respect for the administrative authority. Even individual members of the administration, bearing arms and wearing distinctive clothes, were held in awe. The members gradually grew conscious of their peculiar position, and they expected as a matter of course, submissive gestures from the common people, particularly the poor. They derived pleasure from the expressions and gestures of submission; and when common people did not greet them, they felt offended, and displayed their capacity to inflict violence. Man's mind underwent a change under the new dispensation called civilization; it felt pleasure in insulting those in helpless state.



## Chapter VI

### KING, THE LION

Every one of the numerous units of the settled life, scattered over the wide world, was developing a corporate life, necessitating a controlling institution. The people of every unit had at the early stage of development appointed or elected a headman who grew into a respectable institution. According to the circumstances of different units, further growth of the institution was patterned, broadly speaking, on two concepts. According to one, the head was to remain responsible to the people, that is, he could be changed by them if he was found functioning in contravention of the laws and moral codes prescribed to guide him. According to the other, the headship should be a permanent institution so that, with a certain amount of awe attached to it and supermanship associated with it, the head could represent fear personified and strike terror in the breasts of evil-doers. He should, in short, be paraded as a representative on earth of the Supreme Lord. In the former concept too, mystical beliefs were not subordinated to reason, but human failings were taken into consideration, and removal was provided for in the event of a headman misbehaving.

The latter pattern fitted in with the circumstances in which the headman had already assumed extraordinary powers and made himself irremovable with the help of the force he possessed. Force was a powerful factor, and as years rolled by, the headmen in the former pattern of units also became permanent fixtures, and the people had to descend to a new method: they decided to make the change, if they insisted on it, in favour of a descendant or family member of the undesirable headman. But force, being the decisive factor, could be used to end the election system. It was actually used, and the system disappeared. The headman now gave himself a new title,—king—which was explained to the people as connoting something much higher and superior. and he declared that he represented God, and like God, he could do no wrong.

The king belonged to the age of civilization: he ridiculed the old system as belonging to a dark period in human



history. He began creating new history. With the expansion of the corporate life and with the development of new ideas to make the life of the community more comfortable, the rates of contributions for the king were increased, and he was entrusted with the task of carrying out public works. As king, he found himself in possession of large funds and a force to make collections and maintain law and order; but having ceased to be responsible to the people, he spent public contributions in his absolute discretion. In fact, he now treated the funds as his personal property, and if he spent any part of it on public utility, it was applauded as an act of his great mercy, his magnanimity. Formerly, the force under his control belonged to the people and he was their dignified servant; now he regarded it as his own, and if he used it to do 'justice' and maintain order, it was not because he owed them a duty in lieu of the money they gave him, but because he had been sent by God to discharge those functions in whatever way he liked to do so. Formerly, he was bound to certain laws, and was liable to be removed if he violated them. Now his will was law, and an intention to remove him was a revolt against him and therefore against God. He was, in short, a man possessing the highest power and biggest surplus. He represented the climax of the sanctity of surplus.

How to make use of the tremendous surplus was his preoccupation, and he received any number of suggestions from people wishing to get fractions of that surplus in return for the service they offered to render him. He was the biggest fountainhead from which sprang many avenues of work for men avoiding exacting physical exertion and yet earning higher wages than strenuous workers. There was nothing strange in this. He was only imitating at a big scale what men of surplus had been doing for ages. What distinguished him from them was his ambition to look superior to them all in the exhibition and enjoyment of comforts. If an average man of surplus had one horse to ride on, the king felt he must have a few dozen. That so many horses could not be made full use of by himself and his family members was not a question of any consideration to him. It was enough that he satisfied his vanity by a larger possession.

His sense of superiority was nourished by his idle advisers who found some excuse to live without work. The king had inherited a decent carriage from his predecessor, the headman; but the advisers suggested that each member of



his family should have a separate carriage, and the suggestion was at once given effect to. Some who had creative minds developed artistic designs for the royal carriages. They all got work and the king got another opportunity to impart greater grandeur to his possessions. The king was hailed as the greatest patron of art. He appropriated the compliment, and bought artistic products at fancy prices.

In the very nature of things, the king was bound to grow as a great disturber of economic life of the community. His desires and wants were multiplying. He would not be satisfied, for example, with his big house, the house the headman had built himself with the labour of dozens of workmen, and he decided to have a new one. Hundreds of workmen were withdrawn from the 'service' of men of lesser surplus and employed to build the palace. The workmen consisted of masons, carpenters, engineering advisers and many others. Even men engaged in producing essential articles were attracted by higher wages to the king's building operations, presenting the spectacle of the supply falling short of the demand. The roads constructed inside the place gave better look than public roads. The former were kept in good repair with meticulous care, while the latter were often neglected. The people were getting accustomed to the king's self-willfulness, and tolerated the wrong with an understanding: the common people (using public roads) could not rank with the king, and there was nothing surprising in the palace having better roads. The people had lost all mental contact with the institution of kingship, and the idea of mutual consideration disappeared into the darkness of the bygone ages. The king's demands, which were arbitrarily fixed, were to be honoured like a money-lender's debt, and like the money-lender, the king was not answerable as to how he used the collections.

In this state of the king's behaviour, it should have occurred to the wise men that he was neglecting his duty and that he should be told, in the name of the moral code, that the collections were meant for public purposes and not wholly or largely for his personal use. But the wise men turned their eyes, as they had been doing in the past, to the huge surplus in possession of the king, and instead of thinking morally, they thought selfishly—they thought of making additions to their own income. They became his advisers in celestial and mundane matters.

The priests twisted the code of morality to promote their self-interest. They added a new clause to the defini-



tion of charity. Charity, they said, was not only a mundane affair. It was not only an expression of sympathy for the one in distress; it was a contribution to a fund whose account is kept in the other world, in the realm of the Supreme Lord, and those who gave charity to priests would ensure a good fund of comforts for their spirits after they had departed from their earthly existence. Many men of surplus, enjoying all possible comforts in this world and in a position to spare something for the other world, responded to the new theory of charity, and the priests began reaping a bumper crop. The king, who had the natural wish to possess the largest store of fortune after death separated him from his possessions in this world, was more liberal than any one else in the kingdom. He would pass on to priests large amounts of money and worldly goods. In fact, each member of his household did so separately, because all wished their spirits to enjoy the same status after death as they did in their present physical existence.

The priests in certain kingdoms presented the heavenly dictum in a more acceptable form. They said the spirit was immortal, while the body was perishable. After the body had worn out, the spirit abandoned it and passed into a new one—a new child. That being so, they said, men must accumulate something for the next life while they were in affluent circumstances, and this they could do by giving something away as charity. The enjoyment of that charity by the priests (the priests asserted) was only an optical illusion. In reality everything given away as charity went straight to a storehouse which would be available for the use of the giver in his next life. The priests did not feel or express any obligation for this charity, because they were merely a vehicle carrying the things to the reserve bank. They often told the givers that it was a misnomer to call the credit for the next world charity, and the people appreciated the explanation. The priests had already hypnotised man's minds, and their latest addition to mystical beliefs caught the imagination of all and sundry. Even those who had no surplus to spare for comforts in the next life applied a cut to their tight family budgets and passed on the saving to the priests.

Among the men living on other's labour, the priests occupied the top place. Even the king could claim convincingly that while not applying his limbs to any productive work, he had to see to it that the administration func-



tioned smoothly and order was maintained. But the priests had absolutely no responsibility to worry his mind. Unlike even the money-lenders, he had not to apply his mental energy to preparing and maintaining accounts. In the prevalent economic system, the money-lender could claim that his work was a serious mental work, more tiresome than physical exertion. Which work was more tiring might be argued differently; the point we are concerned here with is that the priest was free from physical or mental exertion. If the king was God's representative on the earth, the priest was the watchdog: a representative had some work, mental or physical, to discharge, but the dog had none at all. Barking was the only function of the dog; and talking was the only function of the priest. But the priest could rightly protest that his comparison with the watchdog did not reflect the factual state: the dog was treated as a lowly animal, while the priest was held in reverence, and in accordance with the tradition (established by himself) all people bowed before him. He was proud of his position because even the king yielded superiority to him in the understanding of spiritual and metaphysical matters.

Humiliation of man by man further grew in the kingly civilization. The large number of male and maid servants that he engaged for his and his wives' personal service, were declared his private property like horses, elephants, cows and buffalos. They would be fed and clothed, but would not be allowed to leave the king's service. For little mistakes or omissions, they would be mercilessly beaten, but they could not think of taking up some other work outside the palace. The king and his staff had a plausible excuse to justify the forced permanency. How servants should behave in the presence of the king, his wives and his senior officers required months of training; the training made the servants disciplined in humility, which to all intents and purposes, was their own humiliation. The servant should at once stand up if the king or any one of his wives passed by him and should bend low to salute them; he should not sit until the dignified person had gone completely out of his sight. He should help the king as also other members of the royal household to put on clothes; he should do so in a manner causing the least discomfort to the royal person's limbs; he should gently lift his feet one by one, and put them into the shoes. Each member of the household had a number of servants to attend on him, and the details of attendance having been



reduced to a system, every servant discharged his allotted task with mechanical thoroughness. For example, as soon as a member was seen going to his bed room, one of the servants would walk briskly to the door and lift the curtain; then he would follow the member into the room to help him remove his clothes and shoes. In the mean time, another servant would spread out the bed and stand erect beside the bedstead to help the member cover up his body.

The king's wives had practically no work to do except the little mental exertion that was inevitable in nurturing jealousy against each other and to secure comparatively greater attention and affection from the king. Each one of them had a number of maid servants constantly attending on her. Some helped her in her make-up; some helped her maintain and add to her beauty by various devices. Even while bathing, she needed the help of a few maid servants. To dress her was a technique and required the services of trained maids. It was not unoften that one of the maids would become an object of envy if the king happened to be attracted to her; but the wife would have to put up with her because the king would not let her be removed.

Thus a new class was created by the king, the class of slaves. The king did not purchase slaves, but as the custom spread as part of the social life among men of big surplus, slaves became a purchasable commodity. If a debtor failed to discharge his debt, the lender would propose that he give away one of his sons in consideration of the amount. The proposal was in the nature of a directive, and the debtor had no alternative but to yield. The son would be separated from the family, and become for life the property of the money-lender. Men, like this son, were the forefathers of the continuous generations of slaves. The master belonged to the age of civilization and the slave was worse than his forbears thousands of years ago. The civilized master was a man of fine tastes and delicate mind. A little irritation caused him by the slave of undeveloped mind would provoke him beyond control and he would beat him mercilessly. If a master did not like a slave or if he had the offer of a fancy price, he would dispose of him: The masters spoke of the new class in justifiable terms. Unlike the paid servants, a slave's well-being was of economic concern to the master; he maintained him as he did his cow or horse. His selfishness blinded him to the fact that man preferred freedom with uncertain and inade-



quate means of livelihood to certain and adequate supply of bread. The argument would of course go in favour of the master if freedom was certain to throw a slave into starvation.

The institution of kingship was making its own contribution to the evolution of civilization. Owing allegiance to God alone and considering all people in his realm as subordinate to him, the king thought of himself as the strongest man. His advisers flatteringly compared him with the lion, and he poyfully appropriated the comparison. He was a lion indeed ! The lion lived on weaker animals; he killed them and yet he was called by civilized people as king of the forest. Similarly, the king fleeced the humble people, and yet he was called the noblest among them. The lion was the bravest animal in the forest, but his superiority was death to many other animals. The king, though he professed to be protector of the people was, in reality, the greatest exploiter.

In the encircling gloom of selfishness, man's mind could not be disciplined by reason, and irrational attitudes and mystical expressions passed as natural feelings and wise words. The advisers, who compared the king with the lion, being regarded as wise men, were blindly followed by common people. When the king passed through the town in his tastefully decorated chariot, the people, lined on both sides of the road, would look at him with awe, feasting their eyes on his fancy dress. They stared at his heavy face and bulky body, and spontaneously whispered to one another, 'Our king is like a lion'. This was an enthralling sight. As a lion made with his appearance the entire crowd of weaker animals at once timid and apprehensive, so did the king. Men behaved as unthinkingly as the animals did, and never did it occur to them that the awe the king had gathered around him represented the abuse of their money and that the institution of which he was the successor was not intended to strike an awe but to discharge a definite function.

The mental degeneration of the people enabled the king to assume more ferocious attitude. The people's contributions were termed as the king's levy, and he decreed that all land holders would have to pay him in cash or kind, after every harvest, a fixed part—say one-sixth—of the produce. The king imposed other taxes also, but this was the biggest. The collection and utilization of taxes was patterned exactly on the law of the jungle. The lion swallowed as much of the prey as he could, and



after he had retired, the remainder would be eaten up by dogs and other lower animals. Similarly, the "lion's share" of the tax collection was appropriated by the king, and a small fraction was spent on the so called utility services. The village, which was the main taxpayer, got practically nothing in return, while the town which paid little got a number of civic amenities.

The town, which owed its existence to surplus, and sustained itself on the manual labour of the village, had become an essential part of the king's administrative machinery and the supplier of his needs. All those numerous things which represented civilization were manufactured in the town; it was the confluence of art, craft, industry, and all activity such as distinguished townsmen from villagers. Most people of the town were necessary to one another; they were not necessary to the villagers who fed them. And since the king himself depended on the town for his comforts, he allotted money for the construction of roads, drains, lanes, etc. The roads were provided with lamp pillars and were lighted at night. The villager compared these amenities to his own condition of living, a condition in which he had to deny, because of his poverty, light to his little hut. But his reaction was different: he enjoyed the town light when he was on a visit to town and stayed there for the night, and narrated the joy to his dear ones when he returned home. If his own hut was dark at night, it was because God had denied him light; for his bad luck, the townsmen were not responsible!

The town had the king's force no doubt to protect the amenities should they ever be endangered; but more powerful than the force was the villager's own acquiescence. He would never ask himself or anybody else that the big army of masons, carpenters, iron-smiths, utensil-makers, manufacturers of luxury goods, and many others were able to go on with their work because they were fed by the producer in the village, and that they gave him practically nothing in return. With food ensured to them by him, and with no responsibility to make a return, they had brought into being an economic system in which they served one another: the town was fed by the village but lived for itself.

In short, the first sharer in the peasant's produce was the king; then came the king's collectors, who, in addition to their wages, collected illegal perquisites for themselves, and then came the money-lender and the middleman. These were the principal sharers. Among the petty sharers were the village carpenter, iron smith, barber,



and above them all was the priest.

The town was like today's limited concern whose many share-holders enjoy dividends according to the amount of their investment. A limited concern's profits are the concern of the share-holders, and of no other. Similarly most activities of the town benefited the townsmen, and not the villagers. The town had been representing the surplus of the community for a long time; since the promotion of the headman to the position of king, it made further progress. It had now more numerous inhabitants. It had now rows of shops selling different articles of townmen's use. These had multiplied and were multiplying as new varieties were being introduced. For example, in the town of the period of the headman, there was a shop selling milk. As more milk flowed from the village into the town, with the town devising new methods of taking a larger share from the village wealth, new forms of the 'utility' of milk were thought of, and there came up new shops selling milk products. The varieties of eatables created a variety of tastes, and men of considerable surplus gave a new meaning to life. When civilization was still in its infancy, they, like all human beings, ate to live; now they lived to eat. To wander, exert and struggle for food was man's problem in the days of wandering life; in the days of early settled life, he had to work hard to satisfy his needs; now with men of surplus, the satisfaction of needs was a question of utter indifference: they sought satisfaction of the palate. The palate was whetted by men who had imbibed from the lazy, easy-going life of the town the inclination to earn with least physical and mental effort. Men vied with one another in preparing more palatable delicacies. Often each of these delicacies had its own taste, and a man of surplus would like to have them all with his meal. These varieties became in the course of time the necessary items of rich men's food, and the shops had a large sale. Milk was not the only raw material for delicacies. Corn, vegetables, fruits, were all similarly made use of for the rich minority.

Business men were now a considerable class. They cast their greedy eyes all around, and went on devising new avenues of income. They bought from the carpenter or iron smith, for example, all his products, and storing them in their shops, fixed their own prices which of course included their fat profits. The workmen and artisans became accustomed to the relief provided by middlemen. It was now as much concern of the business men as of the producers to prepare new designs and new varieties, and



often the former engaged artists and designers for the purpose. If certain new varieties became popular and the demand increased, the business man concerned would establish his own manufacturing unit, and engage independent workmen as his servants. He would attract them with higher wages than what they earned in independent work. He was prudent enough to realize that once they became accustomed to the daily, weekly or monthly wages, they would have to think twice before returning to their independent existence. The business man's big unit was understandably capable of yielding more profits as also better articles, and his shop gained fame. He profited by his experience of human nature—how rich people were attracted to beautiful products; and he raised the margin of profit. It was the profit motive that gave him incentive to produce better things, and he not only made high profits, but also earned recognition at the hands of the king, his ministers and other men of big surplus as being one of the best shop keepers in town. In his class, he exhibited himself as a more respectable man, and he was indeed recognized as such. With wiser application of his mind, he became a man of fine taste. Those mentally less resourceful than himself sought his advice, and he was inflated with pride. His higher profits made him worthy of imitation by those on the lower rungs. He was even envied, and there was a race, called competition in business, in which several new comers surpassed him.

The profit-making business was not limited to shops and manufacturing units. It manifested itself in different ways. For example, a man, somehow earning his livelihood with physical exertion, happened to go to a distant land under a different king. There he saw a fine horse the like of which he had never seen in his own land. He knew his king as a patron of fine things, and he said to himself if he bought the horse and took it to his king, he could make some money. His plan worked as he had thought, and he doubled the investment. The amount of his profit was his own secret, and while the price was considered high by common people, it was little discussed by the fond buyers of good things some of whom aspired to possess similar horses. The man now established himself as a horse dealer and importer, and made himself rich within a short time.

There was a limit to production by physical effort and consequently to the earning thereby, but there was no limit to profits by business, which could be expanded fur-



ther and further on. It was a play of the chessboard; a man of resourceful mind would play the game more cleverly than others. A business man came to know that a hundred miles away, in another kingdom, food supplies had run short following the failure of the seasonal rains, and the prices had consequently gone up. 'Here is an opportunity for you to seize', he said to himself, and despatched to the principal town of that kingdom a fleet of carts laden with corn. He made in this enterprise a heavy extra profit. He got another opportunity in that kingdom itself. He saw new varieties of cloth, finer than those available in his own town, being sold at the shops there. The prices were a little lower than those of the coarse cloth here. He made up his mind to invest the sale proceeds of the corn in cloth, and as he was going to make purchases another idea crossed his mind: instead of making his purchase from the shops, why should he not contact the weavers themselves and eliminate the middleman. He did it, and made an extra amount.

Transactions like these were the beginning of export and import trade. Assuming that the kingdom from which corn was exported had little to spare, the export meant a rise in prices, which in its turn meant curtailment of the food ration of the poor, but not of the rich who were in a position to spend a little more on food. Most exports had a disturbing effect on the pre-export economy. The export-import trade further accentuated the effect of the surplus economy. To the extent, a commodity was exported the poor people's supply was cut short; to the same extent men of surplus added to their supply with the commodities imported.

The town with its multifarious activities looked down upon the village whose activity was limited to the struggle with land and to making some simple things invented at the dawn of civilization. The growth of urban activity, urban civilization to be precise, impaired the character of the metallic money; as the means of exchange, its value remained intact, but it nearly ceased to be the true substitute of the barter system. The example of the horse dealer would illustrate the point. Under the barter system, it would have been very difficult for him to live unless he produced something of utility for the peasant. Now he did not have even that exacting contact with the peasant which the middleman or money-lender had. To many people in the community, money was no more a product of labour; it could be obtained by the designing



people by numerous devices and excuses. Even before the appearance of metallic money, it may be contended, there were people, such as thieves, who lived on others' labour and were not at all affected by the barter system. But there was a noticeable difference between them and men like the horse dealer. The former were regarded criminals and punishable according to the law; the latter passed as men of honest means. The town abounded in such men; they produced nothing for the community, and yet they managed to place themselves on high rungs in the economic ladder of society. They accumulated big amounts of metallic money.

The monetary system was thus made ludicrous. A hundred men engaged for months in the hard work of producing corn from land would not get as much as a single individual managed to get by a trick. The law-givers and moral preceptors were not disturbed by this new disturbing factor. Even the king did not question the appropriating of the bulk of money in circulation by those who did nothing, from the viewpoint of communal utility, to deserve it.

Let us look at the horse dealer from a different angle. His activity fitted in with the general conduct of the king and men of surplus in town. Many people, engaged in preparing different things for the rich and serving them as servants or slaves were also not making any return to the food producer. The horse dealer performed the same service as a servant would have been called upon to. A servant would have no doubt done the job for wages, whose amount would have been much less than the profit the dealer had made, but quite probably he too would have made an extra amount in the transaction. The profit-makers and those redering them different kinds of service made money as a measuring rod a sham. A single individual or a trading concern now possessed so much money that he could buy the entire land of a village. Many a man often did so, and by raising prices of the produce made extra profits.

The growing volume of the metallic money continued impoverishing the actual producer of wealth more and more and strengthening the bridles in the hands of the rich to hold the producer in slavish control. Under the barter system, the result of the community's labour represented its wealth. Later on, metallic money was regarded as a handy means of its measurement; that is, so many coins were equivalent to so much of wheat or so much of other



things. The volume of currency thus had a direct connection with the volume of the wealth produced by the community. The wealth was then generally limited to things of utility to the community. The first disturbance was caused to this simple business of the community by the products which were not of general utility but which were made for man of surplus. They too were reckoned as items of wealth, and the volume of currency increased. This was a very vicious development in the monetary system. The additional wealth grew larger and larger, while its proportion to the vital needs of life was declining. The currency in circulation ceased to have a mathematical relation with the manual labour. The value of the town's activity, which to a great extent included inactivity, was much higher in terms of money than that of the village, and naturally therefore the per capita circulation of currency in the town was much higher. It was an astonishing paradox: those who produced food for the entire community and whose work was more strenuous than the professions in the town, got a small portion of the total currency in circulation.

Another aspect of this monetary system was the mode of fixing prices of different items of wealth. At what prices the various items of land produce should sell was a question which interested the king most, and then numerous other people in the town. The lower the prices of these items the higher would be the king's share in the produce, and others too would get their food supply with a small fraction of the money they made from the urban activity. This system of pricing prevented the peasant from enjoying urban delicacies, and compelled him to live in the pre-civilized state. In fact, his condition was deteriorating as the number of town dwellers was increasing. Whatever the definition of wealth in economics, wealth no more consisted of land produce and the villager's other possessions such as milch and plough cattle, but of money, gold, silver, etc.

In the town itself, the pricing of urban commodities treated the manual worker like the peasant, and the mental manoeuvrer like the king. For this, the psychology and circumstances of the manual worker were partly responsible. A potter, for example, had been accustomed to a peasant's standard of living. He had his counterpart still in the village, and he could not think of getting a higher remuneration for his product. Similar was the situation of an iron smith, a carpenter and others of their



class. Even if they were making things of exclusive use in towns, they were earning just as much as would be equal to the wage standard of a peasant; that was the criterion adopted by men of surplus to evaluate their labour. The manual workers did not think of forging a united front to assume bargaining power. Every one of them was in hurry to dispose of his product; he did not possess a surplus to maintain himself and his family and therefore could not think of detaining the product and dictating higher prices. His prices consequently remained pegged to his primitive standard. Most such workers were like paid servants of rich people whose wages represented the minimum standard of living. But the mental manoeuvrer whose profession was new and whose day-to-day living did not depend on the immediate sale of his product or immediate cashing of his trick, and whose 'service' was of use only to the rich few, enjoyed the dictating position. For example, a dealer in gold and silver ornaments got from a gold smith the idea of a new design which, he believed, would add to the beauty of the women of rich households. He had the thing prepared, and took it to the king or a rich man, and making a psychological study of the reaction, as expressed by words or joy on the face of the buyer, he took a mental decision as to the amount of his profit. This profit often represented many days of sweated labour of manual workers; even the goldsmith from whom the idea emanated and who actually made the thing got only a small fraction of the middleman's profit.

There were many in the town whose position was contradictory: according to the criterion employed in the analysis here, they did not return anything to the peasant who fed them, and yet they laboured to earn their poor living, and could assert with seemingly honest reasoning that they were not parasites. For example, a gardener, who laboured the whole day in his master's garden and also made the fullest possible use of his mental faculties, and earned only just enough to live, would be hurt if he were dubbed as a parasite. He was not a parasite, but was made a prisoner of the system of parasitism; he could not be blamed because he did not realize that he was a prisoner. Hundreds of generations had done what he was doing, and like others in the system, he was proud of his honest conscience. He did not realize and no one told him that he was a hard-working man no doubt, but he was all the same part of an exacting system, in which wealth did not flow from work and work did not always



have communal utility. By and by, since the beginning of the settled life, he had been reduced to the state of a plough animal who was put to hard work but could not recall to its mind the primitive state of life in which it was free and not a prisoner of man.

The poor of the town were passing through the same experience as the peasants had done. Time was, not long ago, when an administrative officer engaged labourers for a public work, and paid them the wages settled. Now an idler with alacrity of mind appeared in the affair. He approached the administrative officer with a suggestion: how the latter could spare his head the botheration. He said that if the officer entrusted the work to him, he would get it done for the same cost and demand payment after the work had been completed satisfactorily. The officer saw all relief and no harm in the offer and accepted it. A new profession—contract system—now entered the town life. The contractor called together a labour force, fixed the wages, which were a little lower than those paid by the officer, and made a margin of profit for himself. According to the general rule of the class of middleman, to which the contractor was going to belong, his appetite grew, and he exacted longer hours of work from the labourers; he engaged only forty men for the work that formerly used to be done by fifty. The workers grumbled, but the contractor told them with all the harshness he could command that under the officer they were not giving full return of the wages paid to them and that he would be a loser if he showed the same generous consideration. The excuse did not convince the men, but silenced them. They were helpless; there was no law to regulate hours of work and wages.

The contractor's mind was constantly looking for new avenues to add to his profits. He used inferior material to what was agreed to between him and the officer, and when the officer raised an objection, he silenced him by sharing with him the extra profit. The contractor exploited the labour, he cheated the king, and he corrupted the officer. He was doing all this, but there was no stir in society. There could not be any because all middlemen were doing the same thing in one way or another; to make money somehow was the general conduct of all men possessing or wanting to possess surplus.



## Chapter VII

### TRAIL OF FEUDALISM

A kingdom consisted of many villages and several towns, and one kingdom differed in size from another... The kings' revenues also differed, and so naturally did the quantum of their comfort and splendour. A king enjoying the services of one hundred servants and slaves and having a larger territory to fill his coffers considered himself superior to one of a neighbouring state, and his doing so excited the envy of the neighbour. This envy and the superior king's expectation to be acknowledged as such by the inferior created tension in their mutual relations, and eventually made them inimical to each other. The superior was conscious of his larger force, and challenged the other to a fight. The other had either to fight or to agree to owe him allegiance as a minister did to his king. He preferred fighting to the latter course which appeared utterly humiliating to him. He too was conscious of his inferior man-power, and proceeded to make up the deficiency by raising the tax rates and by calling more men to arms. The information of this preparation reached the other side, and the superior king made further addition to his army. The economic life of both the kingdoms was thus violently shaken. In both, royal servants were employed to purchase food stocks and other things for the fighting forces. The prices shot up, and while to rich people, the price rise meant a little more expense, to the poor it meant a curtailment of the necessities of life, even food.

Such a catastrophe was to be witnessed only during a famine. A famine was God's curse or nature's waywardness, and the people would quietly submit to privations. But what were they to be told now when the crops were excellent and there was no dearth of anything? And what were they to be told about the king's decree for higher taxes? The king was all powerful and did not owe an explanation to the people; but a war was to be fought, and he needed willing co-operation rather than submission born of helplessness. He consulted his advisers and priests, belonging to the class of law-givers and moral code interpreters. To give advice to the king and others on occasions



of mental difficulties was the job of these idle men, and they came out with a prescription. The law-givers said it was the legal duty of every man to be as much concerned about the safety of the kingdom and as much loyal to it as he was to his family. A man disloyal to the king was punishable under the law. The moral code preceptors took the issue to a loftier plane. They said those who sacrificed willingly their all including their lives for their kingdom would earn the affection of God and be admitted into heaven; those who displayed a contrary conduct would render themselves liable to punishment by God, and would have their spirits (after death) thrown into the hell-fire. The advisers' interests had tethered them by the neck to the king, and they would not suggest a way of reconciliation between the two kings. Maybe, they were prudent enough to realize that a conciliation was impracticable because the king of the bigger territory would stick to his superiority complex while the other would obstinately maintain his disinclination to have inferiority labelled on him permanently. Therefore, believing that the impending war was inevitable, they decided to dignify suffering by calling it a noble sacrifice for the motherland.

And there was war. The armies of the two sides advanced towards each other. On each side, there were rows of uniformed and armed men, all poor, who had volunteered to make soldiering a means of livelihood, and would not have done so, unless they were compelled by a royal order, if they had remunerative jobs elsewhere. Hardly any of them was impelled to join the army by the advice of moral preceptors. They had no thought of the pleasures of heaven nor of the fear of hell-fire burning them for long years if they refused to enter the army. They were all innocent people; those on the one side did not hate those on the other, nor did they demand superiority or inferiority to be acknowledged. After they had joined the army for bread, the men of each side were given a lurid picture in so many words about the king of the other side. Even the superior king said that he had been compelled to fight by the intransigence of the other king. When the men of the two sides were leaving their homes for the battlefield, they were full of emotions for their near and dear ones, whom they might not see again. But as they were being marched to the battlefield with the heroic songs sending notes of valour into their hearts and reminding them that death was better than cowardly surrender to the enemy, they were filled with a wholly diffe-



rent thought. The home emotions left them spontaneously yielding place to a determination to fight and defeat the enemy, whatever the consequence; they seemed to believe firmly that honour would embrace them after death. Their minds were hypnotised and incapacitated to think rationally; their minds were relieved of the family emotion and filled with that for the kingdom. Love for the territory was, they were told, the enlarged form of love for the family. In the hypnotised state of their minds, they could not think they were being asked to go headlong into an evil adventure where they ran the risk of making their wives widows and their children orphans. And they would not think that none of the wisemen had ever called upon them to make a similar sacrifice in the settlement of a quarrel between two neighbouring households; they were not called upon to come together and unitedly fight men in their own town who had for long periods been exacting submissiveness from them, but now they were asked to injure and kill those—poor men like themselves—who had done them no harm, and not those who in their own town directly harmed them.

To fight an invader in order to defend the territory or the kingdom to which one belonged was, if looked at from a different angle, a duty. Whatever the economic view of the conduct of the king and other parasites, the government of the kingdom maintained law and order and ensured enjoyment, within certain limitations, of the customary rights. The degree of this enjoyment could be likened to the loose corporate life of a family whose members occupied different rungs in the economic ladder; but they loved one another and from this mutual love issued forth quite naturally an attitude of help for each other. This attitude was given the form of a solemn responsibility. Rightly did the wisemen assert that the people should have the same love for their kingdom, and fight the invader in the same way as the members of a family would fight an attacker. The issue could, however, be argued wholly differently. The real object of fighting was to defend the king from being deprived of his kingdom; the invading king, if he won the war, would annex the invaded territory to his realm, but he too would maintain law and order and ensure protection to the people. This argument might be countered by the assertion that the new king might be more exacting; it might be supported by the assertion that he might be less exacting. The king was made a permanent institution by himself; he had with



his force usurped the right of the people to have a headman of their choice and to remove him if he did not behave appropriately. The force (in place of the people) having become the determining factor, a more powerful king could not be accused of misconduct, and the people could logically watch almost unconcernedly the fighting between the two. Their only concern would be the amount of the personal loss they might be put to. But this much concern would not alter their attitude of unconcern, because if the fighting must take place, even the attitude of willing help might put them to some or the same amount of personal loss. The most powerful argument, already dealt with, therefore stands out; why should the poor of one side fight the poor of the other for no fault of any one of them, and what would they lose if the two kingdoms were united into one.

But these hypothetical arguments did not assume the shape of reality; they had been made inaccessible to most minds; those who showed a tendency to entertain them were execrated as traitors and awarded heavy punishments. In actual practice only the paid soldiers did the fighting, and fighting was ensured by strict laws; a soldier refusing to fight or refusing to kill the stranger on the other side made himself liable, under the law, to heavy punishment; he could even be sentenced to death. What, in effect, exacted loyalty from him to the king was first wages and then fear of punishment. Only a few soldiers, if at all, were influenced in their fighting by devotion to the king; their minds at the battlefield were a paradoxical mixture of zeal and fear.

Returning to the two kings, the one supposed to be inferior by his rival was defeated after many of his soldiers had been grievously injured or killed, and after they had destroyed a large number of the 'enemy'. The 'inferior' king was taken prisoner and deprived of his throne. The 'superior' king had now a bigger territory to rule over: that was the only gainful result of so much bloodshed of poor, innocent people. His income nearly doubled, and he added to his self and personal possessions. After some time, the war became an event of history; the old king was forgotten by the people, and the new one was given the same honour. The moral code and law both provided that king—whoever the king—must be respected, obeyed and honoured, and not only did the new king invoke these but was helped in doing so by the law administrators and moral preceptors. The king represented God; this dictum had



been dinned into the ears of the people time and again, and one king was not different from another. Therefore the present king was as good a representative of God as the previous one.

The extension of the new king's domain gave manoeuvrers another opportunity, and a new class of middlemen was born. They suggested that even with a large administrative machinery, it would not be possible for the king to collect his revenue dues in full, and that if he entrusted the work to men of trustworthy economic status in consideration of a certain percentage, he could avoid a cumbersome machinery and yet ensure full realisation. This suggestion appeared to the king as a better system; it minimised chances of some dues being left uncollected. And the new system was adopted. Many of these middlemen were former rent collectors of the king; now they were not his servants, but were entitled, to impart dignity to their position, landlords. By and by, the landlords became the nucleus of the entire administrative activity in their respective areas, and acquired the status of little kings.

The first adverse effect of the new institution was an extra burden on the peasant. The king had by tradition been indifferent to the economic life of the peasantry—how much of their produce was taken away from them on different excuses and how much was left with them and whether the remainder was enough for their bare necessities was not his concern. Such being his attitude, he did not care to bind the rent-collecting contractors to any legal terms with which they could be prevented from raising the revenue rates. The king belonged to an age when anybody could, by a supposedly 'legal' device, fleece anybody; and the peasant had always been fleeced the most. Under the shelter of the propitious tradition, the landlords settled down to multiply their riches. They had a plausible excuse to increase revenue rates. They said they would have to pay the king the entire amount of dues, and since a hundred per cent collection was seldom possible, they would have to make an extra charge, which would cover their own livelihood also. To the king the new system was definitely a profitable improvement on the former; to the contractors, it was a unique means of livelihood unique in the sense that it gave them not only easy money but kingly awe and dignity. To the peasants, it meant an additional load in return for which they got another king to humiliate them, to exact obedience from



them.

The impact of landlordism on the economic and social life of the village was severer than any caused by earlier developments from the beginning of the settled life down to the birth of the institution of kingship. The landlord proceeded slowly and steadily on a path which led to serfdom of the peasant; all people of the village were virtually reduced to that position. By his behaviour, he compelled them to feel that they existed for him and they worked for him. If he decided to plant a new orchard, he would summon some stout-bodied men, and put them on the work. The king had placed them all under him; they were subservient to him and could not dare make a demand for payment of the work they did for him. Even women and children were not spared. He made his own 'improvement' on slavery; he did not have to purchase and maintain slaves, and yet he had a large number of them under his control, and their physical well-being, unlike slave masters, was not his concern. They were unpaid labourers of his field; they rendered him all manner of menial service. If somehow the yield of his field was found to be below the expectation, the responsibility would be fixed on the unpaid labourers, and they would be called upon to make good the 'loss' from their yield. He justified this imposition by asserting that they did not take the same interest in his field as they did in theirs. And additionally, they would be abused for the 'negligence' and told sternly that should they repeat it in future, the compensation to be collected from them would be doubled. The landlord, if he was inclined to make a mockery of the sex morality, seemed to think that every beautiful woman in the village was his property, and would set aside all scruples and have any of them into his household temporarily or permanently. Sex waywardness, he realized, was likely to provoke his 'slaves' to revolt, and he had to employ shrewdness and cunning in this part of his activities.

The kingdom, under the new institution, was divided into a number of units, but they all imparted compactness to it. Each unit maintained a small army with its own resources, and if ever the king needed a force to fight an enemy, he had only to send round a circular letter calling upon the units to despatch so many soldiers to him, and he would get a body of trained soldiers. He was getting his revenues all right, and additionally the units had grown into so many centres of his defence poten-



tial, on which he had to spend pretty little. And the landlords were so many captains, all stout and warlike, to head the defence force. The units were better substitutes of the former arrangement to collect war funds. Now a landlord had just to be asked to collect and contribute so much of foodgrains and other things, and the order would be fully carried out. The units brought into being a regimented system; the king was happy that the wise suggestion of the middlemen had given him an organisation which considerably facilitated performance of the multifarious royal functions.

These functions included the administration of justice. The wise men of the old had framed some laws, and the king's officers administered them. The landlord took over this function also. It was not entrusted to him formally; he had made himself so indispensable and desirable for the king, that he went on expanding his functions, and the king gave his consent gladly. The landlord was the greatest disturber of law and morality in the unit under his charge, and he functioned as a judge! Even customary laws that the community had evolved during the long period of the settled life were ignored by him when they did not suit his way of doing justice. The amount of corporal punishment he awarded to a criminal depended on the degree of provocation the narration of the crime caused him. As long as justice was administered by the king and his officers, the cases were dealt with in an impersonal manner. The landlord had personal contact with so many people of the village, and there was always a chance of a victim of his anger being put up before him as an accused. In such a case, the old prejudice was largely a determinant of the amount of punishment—the accused could not escape punishment. Similarly, if he was favourably disposed towards an accused, the man, even if he was rightly prosecuted, would be acquitted; the landlord-judge would not believe that a man so obedient in doing unpaid service for him would commit a criminal act. The administration of justice was not generally regarded by the people as such; it was a terror, and even innocent men feared they might be caught and punished. In fact, innocent men were more afraid of the landlord-judge than the criminals; the latter, with their hardened hearts and minds, hoped that they would escape punishment and succeed in implicating innocent people. The landlord was not usually a scrupulous man, and could succumb to sharing an ill-gotten gain with a thief. That was the reason



why the incidence of thieving increased under landlordism as compared to what it was under the previous system. Indeed, as the volume of idleness or money-making without physical exertion, was increasing, the incidence of crime was rising. The landlord was the obvious example to be emulated. If he could get men to work in his field gratis and enjoy with pelf and pride the fruits of their labour, why should those attracted by the pleasure of idleness not emulate him? They would harvest ripe corn fields at night or enter a house armed with lethal weapons, and attack the inmates. The thief had logic on his side, though he did not understand it. He could protest at the trial that the landlord-judge's position was as much exposed to question as his own. Like the landlord himself, he had thought of a device to get part of the peasant's produce without work; since the opportunity of the landlord was not available to him, he hit upon a different device. The thief, however, did not invoke such an argument, obviously because it would be a confession of his guilt, and he would be deprived of the chance to escape punishment by false evidence.

The landlords had plenty of leisure and like the king, they too became patrons of art and culture. Under the old system of revenue collection, it was not always possible for what was called local 'talent' to secure the king's patronage; the long distance between his residence and the king was a great impediment. This talent commended itself to the landlord in a variety of ways. Man, when in a hilarious mood, stretched his spoken words with a melodious voice, and this beginning of singing for pleasure gradually developed into an art, in the same way as language had done after the articulation of speech. Like language, singing was bound to develop, and men of talent, as distinct from men of ordinary mental calibre, developed a scientific system of regulating voice to produce ever better melody. A melodious voice need not be articulate, but if it was made so by language, it would be more pleasant to the senses. Men of talent composed poems and sang them according to the regulation. A peasant boy, to illustrate the point to be brought out here, had taken pains to train his voice, and was one day singing a little loudly, while working in his father's field, a poem which he had learnt by heart. The landlord of the village who happened to pass that way, was so much taken up by the sweet voice that he stopped to watch, and when the singing was over, called the boy and ordered him to appear



the next day before him at his residence. The boy was asked to stop working in the field, and when he was bewildered at the command which meant depriving his father of the little help he gave him, he was told that he would get a monthly pay, and his job would be to sing for the landlord whenever he was asked to do so. The boy was happy beyond expression; he not only escaped the strenuous work, but also got an opportunity to nourish the art of which he had become very fond. This was a great event in the life of the village; it served as an incentive to some others, and they applied themselves devotedly to become better singers than the boy. Some of them succeeded admirably, and got admission into the landlord's service. The scope of this profession expanded gradually, and there sprang up classical dancers, instrument players, drama parties, and also, as a corollary, instrument makes, sellers (the middlemen), and many other aiders of the trade. The development of this art everywhere gave impetus to competition, and different village units as also towns vied with each to excel the other in their performances. Men engaged in vital production and other activities still sang, but they were not noticeable; singers, dancers and instrument players were now men of a distinct profession, and only they were entitled to be called artistes.

The landlords declared with pride that but for their patronisation of the art, it would have remained in an uncultured and unreclaimed state, and that it was their purse which enabled men of talent to have more remunerative means of livelihood. They professed to be recognisers and rewarders of merit, and as such, justified their position as appropriators of part of the king's revenues and collectors of perquisites. Was it possible, they asked, for the art to flourish if they did not have large funds of money to spend? The dumb peasantry had no answer to give. In fact, the excuse was not addressed to the peasants; it was expressed in a self-complacent mood. But there was an answer. The artiste was a servant like other servants of the landlord. A masseur, for example, gave relief to the landlord's limbs; similarly a singer provided pleasure to his senses. Art was a business commodity; it was sold by artistes and purchased by the landlord with part of the money he collected from the peasants. To tell the peasant that his money was being partly utilised for the development of art was to deceive him. The artiste was not at the peasant's dispo-



sal; the peasant was not even invited to the performances at the landlord's residence; he was still at the pre-development primitive stage of singing. He too had a sense of pleasure for music, dance, and instruments, and he satisfied it with the amateurish stuff, which was part of the strenuous work for livelihood and not a distinct profession of those who had withdrawn from manual work. The incentive to the separation of art from work appeared outside the landlord's residence also, and villagers, with their own subscriptions, held musical and dramatic performances, but these were, in the first instance, rare events and in the second, they were a very poor shadow of the art in the employ of the landlord.

From the purse of the landlord as from men of similar status in towns issued forth a number of other activities, all eventually setting themselves up as distinct professions. Could there be another entertainment, as a diversion from the daily routine of music and drama, to fill the big void of leisure in the landlord's life? The enterprising said, 'yes, not one but several'. One of them appeared in the presence with a couple of bulls, whom he had trained to fight each other with intoxicants and provocation. The landlord enjoyed the fighting; there was visible an expression of ecstasy on his face, which had the natural reaction of joy of success on the face of the presenter also. He was asked to name his own reward, and he asked his ancestral land to be made free of revenue. The prayer was gladly granted, and it started the practice of free gifts of land to those who invented devices to please the landlord; the free lands were tilled by paid labour, and the owners got the crops without any physical exertion on their part. Some time later, some entertainers appeared before the landlord with a couple of elephants, and gave his senses a better enjoyment than that he derived from the bull fight. They too received a handsome reward and land gift. All the beneficiaries hailed the landlord as a genius possessing tremendous qualities to recognise the worth of skill and art.

These new professions which began with the landlord or town elite's 'encouragement' held paid shows also for the general public; but only those who possessed enough surplus, could visit them. To the peasants, labourers and other classes of the poor, who hardly earned just enough for their bare necessities of life, the shows were a costly luxury. If any one of them visited these, he did so by neglecting his family, and was regarded in his socie-



ty as irresponsible and a waster.

The landlord's authority was restricted to his village, and did not extend to the town, but urban people, conscious of his riches, approached him, as they did the king, with their manufactured goods. Many a landlord was attracted to profit-making propositions of the town, and added to his income by starting some kind of business; he was a far-sighted man, and made timely provision for his expanding family—his sons and grandsons. He made use of his business acumen in his own village also. He once saw a few poor hawkers, come from the town with small stocks of things of common use, such as salt, cloth, spices, utensils, knives, to sell these to villagers. They squatted on an uncultivated barren plot of land, and came there once or twice a week. The landlord declared the land as a market place, appropriating it to himself, and required every squatter to pay him a certain amount of rent for each day of occupation. They agreed to pay and raised their prices to the extent of this payment, even to a larger extent, and again the burden fell on the villagers. That they would request the landlord not to collect the rent was unthinkable: the landlord had the plausible answer that the land belonged to him, and he would not let it be used free by those who came to make profit.

As landlordism was firmly established, the landlord proclaimed himself owner of the entire land of the village, again with a plausible explanation. He said what the peasants paid him was rent, and since it was a rent the land belonged to him. Thus the next stage in the progress of landlordism was more vexatious to the peasant: the huts belonged to them, but the land to the landlord, who some times used his right of demolishing the huts and ejecting 'tenants' on the excuse that he needed the land for his private use. The peasant's life thus became insecure, and the landlord's exploitation increased further. His word was law; if a peasant desired to construct a well for irrigation, he would have to seek the landlord's permission, which brought into the picture the landlord's agents, as exacting as himself. They collected a certain amount for themselves before they conveyed the landlord's consent. And even then, the peasant could not claim, on the basis of his investment on the well, continuity of his holding, and if ever the landlord or his agents' displeasure resulted in the extreme step of ejection, the peasant would lose the well, which would be declared the landlord's property. Since it was the landlord's property now, the next culti-



vator would be required to pay the cost of water he used for irrigation.

The landlord was declaring himself master of all he surveyed. The village tanks from whose fish the villagers supplemented their food, the forest from which they had been getting their fire wood and timber throughout the centuries of the settled life, all belonged to the landlord, and it was in his pleasure to allow their free use or charge a price. Formerly, the cost of producing house timber from a tree and money spent on its carriage were the determinants of its price, of course with the seller's profit added to them. Now the trees belonged to the landlord, and what had been the community's property, was a source of income to a single individual, the landlord. The king, who would have perhaps questioned the landlord's increasing grabbing, was already silenced by the inclusion of forests in the revenue-yielding lands.

Every new device of income for the landlord or the king or other types of parasites meant a new cut in the residue of the land produce. It affected the peasant's social life also. When the pressure on his produce was not so heavy, he was a civilized man as regards his behaviour towards the physically incapacitated; he used to spare a little for them even if they were strangers to him. But now his own decrepit and infirm dependents appeared a burden to him. He was alive to his responsibility, and his sense of affection was still quite as keen as before, but when the resources were running short of the family requirement, selfishness was bound, in a large measure, to assert itself against the acquired responsibilities of civilization. And it did, leading to disharmony among family members. The mother gave her children priority in feeding and clothing over her parents-in-law, and the latter grumbled over what they considered neglect of them. Despite the deterioration in their economic condition, most people kept the family intact; nevertheless there were some, who gave free vent to man's natural instinct of selfishness, and utterly neglected decrepit dependents. The civilized society witnessed a new spectacle; quite a few blind and decrepit squatted on the pathway and started begging for food. They were faced with starvation and had no alternative. Formerly the incapacitated, who had been deprived by death of their supporters, were generously treated by village people. Now their depressed economic condition forced them to shirk the traditional responsibility, and begging appeared on the face of civi-



lisation as another black speck.

The most pathetic part of it all was the firm belief in fate. All peasant families were not alike, and the difference in their economic condition, they told themselves, was due to their fate. The landlord, the outstanding cause of the evil, was not blamed; on the contrary he got in the general poverty around him an opportunity to add to his social status by parading the 'virtue' of charity and mercy. If he gave a blind man a decent amount of alms—as much as could feed him for a month—the man would praise him to every passerby. If the blind, so benefited, possessed the faculty of composing and singing a song, he would versify the praise and sing it loudly. The landlord showed his little mercies to other needy man also. A destitute, for example, went to him, bowed low, and prayed that if he, in his mercy, gave him a little amount of money he would be able to discharge the responsibility of marrying his daughter. The landlord graciously obliged him, and the beneficiary, overwhelmed with obligation, announced the help to all and sundry. And the landlord became known as an embodiment of charity and mercy, a godly man indeed.

A landlord's unit—a village or a group of villages—was now a saleable property. If ever a landlord ran into heavy debts occasioned by his extraordinary expensive habits or misconduct, he would sell the 'property' to another landlord or an urban middleman, and try his luck as a middleman in the town. The urban landlord, who had plenty of money-making interests in the town itself, was an absentee landlord. He engaged a manager to act for him. The manager was not contented, as was the rule, with his salary, and the arrival of this new intermediary constituted a new burden on the peasant. As a paid servant, charity and mercy were seldom a consideration in his relations with the peasantry. He was more exacting than the landlord. To the absentee landlord, the village was an investment, and since it was yielding much more than the usual rate of interest, he was satisfied with the return he was getting through the manager. Both were happy, but the peasant was more miserable.





## Chapter VIII

### ANIMISM AND RELIGION

Ever since man surrendered to mysticism, after the failure of reason to answer the questions about the so-called heavenly bodies and other manifestations incomprehensible to him, he had been encouraging, multiplying, and propagating mystical beliefs. These beliefs were man's religion. The believer, said the wise men, was a religious man, the non-believer irreligious—a religious man was a good man, and an irreligious man a bad man.

After men had developed unshakable faith in the invisible Supreme Lord and subordinate gods, the wise men gave them form and installed stone idols or whole stones representing them. These, the wise men laid down, should be regularly worshipped by the people. The priests took charge of the statues or stone-gods and prescribed that some material offerings, silver, gold or usable commodities, should be made before the deity; this offering was the priest's share.

Such, in a nutshell, was man's religion. One might rightly protest that these practices were one part of religion—religion was a more elaborate system embracing a much wider arena in man's affairs in this world and beyond it. But we are concerned here with religion as it affected man's economic life. It was this aspect which often constituted the circumstantial background of the rise of religious reformers from time to time; the reformers were revolutionaries revolting against the wrongs they saw. How far their revolution succeeded and whether they discovered and prescribed right remedies against the ills is another question. The Vedas are the oldest written scriptures; they are respected for the great learning and experiences that have gone into them. They belonged to the Aryan race and were written at a time when crowds of people, even the Aryans, would move from place to place searching for better resources to make life more fulsome and more comfortable. They therefore steered clear of what a man did to another or a group of men to another group. Ever since man appeared on the earth there had been a tradition in some parts of the world, of a group of men dislodging another group, and taking possession of its



economic resources, and even reducing the defeated men to a state of slavery. The Aryans themselves did so with equanimity; they would not declare the traditional way to prosperity irreligious. So the scriptures dealt first with man in relation to God, and then regulated the social life in the Aryan community. How men carried on their economic life was largely their own concern.

But wretchedness on the one side and affluence on the other were bound to attract notice of those whose sense of reason was not satisfied by the usual answer contained in the scripture or given by the wise men. Why were there sorrow and misfortune and suffering? Many asked themselves this question, but did not worry their heads to produce an answer. They asked the question in a curious mood, and allowed it to slip away by the routine of their work. One of the earliest known men, who were constantly haunted by the question and made restless by it, was Zarathustra commonly known as Zoroaster. He was pained by the suffering of the common people and felt impelled to tell himself that he must alleviate it. The first impulse that seized him, as is usually the case with such men, was to subject himself to an unhappy life so that he could mitigate the suffering of his mind caused by the sight of physical suffering of others. He took to the life of a hermit, believing that by detaching himself from the day-to-day life, he would 'discover the source of suffering in the world'. He had no faith in the mystical answers provided by the wise men before him. He would not believe that if the rain-god was appeased by prayers and offerings, regulated rains, neither excessive nor scanty, would descend upon the earth. But suffering was a very elaborate term; if the failure of rains brought suffering, so did disease. He was looking for an answer to the whole elaborate term.

Before looking into the solution Zoroaster discovered, it would be desirable to have an idea of the prevalent beliefs in which he had grown. The people (Iranians) worshipped many Nature-gods, the Sun-god, the Rain-god, Clan-gods, Family-gods, and many other gods and spirits. Perhaps these gods and spirits were more numerous than those worshipped in India, where the Aryans were leading a happy life. The Iranian farmer and shepherd had a harder life than his Indian counterpart, and because of greater hardship, fear and danger, he was more afraid of harm coming to him at any time, and he worshipped all possible gods that were prescribed by the



priests. The priests claimed that they possessed the power and wherewithal to appease the displeased gods; they were intermediaries between the gods and the people.

With the prevalent beliefs in his mind and critically examining them, Zoroaster went to Mount Sabalan, to a place of solitude, so that his mind, totally detached from wordly distractions, might give him a solution. It was the inquiry of a man who had grown in mysticism; his thinking could not be entirely free from its influence. Yet he produced a solution, not wholly mystical. After a great deal of wandering and suffering, he received light from the setting sun. One day as he watched the sun set, it occurred to him that like day and night—light and darkness—the world consisted of Good and Evil, good gods would not do evil, for that was not their nature to do so; and evil gods would not do good for that was not their nature to do so.

He rejected the belief that the manifestations like the Sun were gods; they were, he said, God's creation. Who created the universe and heavenly bodies was not a new question, nor was the answer, God, a new answer. Nor was this an answer to the question that had troubled Zoroaster. The second part of his answer proceeded a little towards the solution. When it was suggested to Zoroaster that if there were two dominant spirits in the world, the Good Spirit and the Evil Spirit, man must be dutiful to both, he answered in the negative: 'Good will win over Evil in the end. Evil has no foresight. The Wise Lord remembers the past and understands the future. But the Evil Spirit does not know the past nor the future. Evil lives only for the profits of the present. That is why the Wise One will win the battle over Evil in the end'.

Profits were indeed a major cause of suffering and those who indulged in making them by various devices were doing an evil act. Such people were under the effect of the Evil Spirit, and caused suffering to those from whom they made profits. Zoroaster held out fear of punishment for evil doers, not in this life, but after they were dead and gone: 'All the thoughts a man thinks and all the words a man speaks and all the deeds a man does each day of his life are written down in the Book of Life. The good thoughts, words, and deeds are written down on one side, and the bad thoughts, words, and deeds are written down on the other side. When a man dies his soul comes up to the Keeper of the Book of Life. If his good thoughts, words, and deeds are greater than his evil thoughts,



words, and deeds, then the soul goes to Heaven. Otherwise the soul must go down to the tortures of Hell'. Then he explained the Day of Judgement; 'On that Day of Days the Wise Lord will triumph over the Evil Spirit. Good will triumph over Evil. Then all the dead will come to life again. The good souls and the bad souls will be tried. They will pass through a flow of molten metal. To the good it will seem like passing through warm milk. But the evil will burn everlastingly. And then the Good Lord will banish the Evil Spirit and all the evil souls into the middle of the earth and keep them there for ever. And on that Day of Days the good and happy world without evil will begin and last forever'.

Now, what were good thoughts, good words, and good deeds? Zoroaster's answer was; 'Truth is good, falsehood is evil. A man must be pure in thoughts and deeds. He must be charitable and help all in need; he must work the land, grow trees, raise cattle or do other profitable and useful labour; and he must be kind to all useful animals'.

Thus, according to Zoroaster, good men were those who exerted their limbs to earn their bread, and not those who made profits, huge profits, by so many devices which did not involve 'labour'. This essential quality would not make man good unless he was also charitable; it was his duty to help those who could not help themselves because of their physical or mental disability.

But Zoroaster was undone by the king of Iran not by a design, but by proclaiming him as the Prophet of a new religion. Zoroaster was a thinker and a righteous man. By being proclaimed a Prophet, he was made worshippable as the King's highest priest. A priest was not to earn his bread by exertion of his limbs; his job was to advise the King and the people and to interpret religion. The king assigned that role to the Highest Priest. It was a new role; he was to preside over the propagation of a new religion. He had missionaries sent out to make his teachings known to the people of Iran as also to those in other kingdoms of the neighbourhood. Zoroaster was growing conscious of the loftiness of his teaching and of his greatness, and he felt that the unwilling should be forced to accept Zoroastrianism. Whatever may have been meant by him, in actual practice what was forced upon the people was the belief in one God as against so many gods, and not a system by which profit-making devices might be stopped.



Another step taken for the spread of Zoroastrianism, at the instance of the Prophet himself, made the new religion look a repentable thought, though righteously conceived. It began with an ultimatum served on the King of Turan to whom the Iranians were in debt, to the following effect: 'If you, King of Turan, and your people will not give up your evil ways of idol worship, and accept the techings of the Wise Lord as preached by the Prophet Zoroaster, then we will refuse to pay our debt to you'. It led to a war between the two kingdoms, and after many fierce battles, the Iranians won. After seventeen years, Turan again went to war, and this time Iran was defeated, and Zoroaster was killed.

Whether the substitution of the belief in one God for that in a number of gods really ensured heaven to men of the new faith, is not a question that need be discussed here; what deserves comment is that the two wars caused the blood of many innocent men to be spilled; they had done no wrong to any human being, and yet they were given the punishment deserved only by a man-killer. The suffering to alleviate which Zoroaster inflicted privation on himself and proposed a remedy not only continued as ever, but increased to a degree where men shuddered to think of a repetition.

Zoroaster's finding was the conspicuous truth: man's selfishness and nature's waywardness were the two main causes of suffering. These were more poignant experiences in regions where people still wandered looking for better fields and better pasturelands and seizing by force the fruits of others' labour. The attackers too had their beliefs, and invoked them to further their selfish ends; the leaders of the attacking groups offered prayers before the idols of their belief to help them attain victory. The victims did likewise. Both parties had firm faith in their respective gods, and betrayed the irrational state of their minds—minds that had surrendered themselves to mysticism,—and, though depending wholly on their strength, they never believed that physical strength was the only decisive factor. War leaders, even if they believed in this factor, always associated mystic beliefs with their war preparations and fighting knowing that only through these beliefs could the people as different from paid soldiers be bound together to fight. Even new beliefs were established and put down the throats of credulous people easily. This is what for example Moses did with all the good intentions and for a good cause.



The story of Moses is the story of the Israelites. The Israelites were the descendents of Abraham, who like Zoroaster, revolted against the idol worship in the land of the Chaldees, the land of his birth, but gave no new idea. Abraham merely reverted to the faith that preceded the idols: 'Worship the gods that made the sun and the moon and the stars; worship the gods that give us rain, and that make the fields rich with pasture, and the sheep heavy with lambs.' There was an element of reason in the argument that urged him to revolt. The idols that his father, who was an idolmaker by profession, fashioned out of rough stone or wet clay were installed in temples for workshop. How could these pieces of stone that were hammered into a presentable shape by his father be powerful gods, Abraham asked himself. His mind would not accept them as gods, and he told people that the idols should not be worshipped. His mind did not go further and did not ask whether worshipping the sun was necessary to ensure its regular appearance or whether the sun needed to be paid in the form of worship for the kindness it did by its regular appearance to the people on the earth. He remained largely attached to mysticism. His rejection of the idols and reiteration of the old faith was no doubt partial abandonment of a blind faith, but it had practically nothing to do with the people's economic life. No direction as to how they should pursue their economic life was given, and the Israelites went ahead with their traditional way: Herdsmen as they were, they wandered searching for better lands, and fought the tribes to seize their lands. They would not worship idols, but they saw no wrong in attacking, injuring and killing their victims who did them no harm.

When they were in the land of Canaan, they were afflicted by a great famine, and thence they went, not as attackers but as refugees, to Egypt, where they knew there would be plenty of fields and pasturelands. They were permitted to settle in the province of Goshen, close to the Nile River. Here they found idol worship universally prevalent, and when the Egyptians found out that the new comers were opposed to it they feared the Israelites might destroy their idols. Thus the Israelites constituted a problem, not because they were sharers in the economic resources of Egypt, but because they had different mystical beliefs, and the king of Egypt, on the advice of the Wise Men, ordered all the Israelites to be made slave, in the hope that as slaves, they would think and believe as their



masters did. But when the Israelites persisted in maintaining their distinct identity and kept aloof from the Egyptians, the King, again on the advice of his Wise Men, promulgated a law that all the Hebrew boys should be drowned as soon as they were born so that their girls would have no alternative but to marry Egyptians.

One of these unfortunate Hebrew mothers concealed the birth and instead of handing over her new-born son to be drowned, she put the child in a basket and let it float down the Nile. This child, who later in life, became known as Moses, happened to be found by the King's daughter, who brought him up as her own son. When Moses was a grown up boy, he found out all about the law and that he was a Hebrew and his people worked as slaves in Egypt. He resolved to liberate them. How was he to do it? He had no army, and his own people would not listen to him if he asked them to follow him to another land where they could work and earn their bread as freemen. Therefore, he invoked mysticism, and presented one of the commonly worshipped gods as the one Supreme God, the God of the Thunder and the Storm., whom he called Jehovah. During his long and lonely life in a desert, he developed the belief that this God ruled the high heavens. His devotion to the cause of his people had already endeared him to them, and when he seemed to them as their honest preceptor, they put faith in the new belief. With the force of his character and with his strong will, he approached the King and advised him not to obstruct the Hebrews going out of Egypt if they so desired. The King gave permission despite the fact that the Hebrew slaves had become part of Egyptian economy and Egyptians depended on them for menial work. But the question before the slaves was why should they abandon their settled life, whatever their social and economic position, and take to a hazardous course—they would be a liberated people all right but they might have to starve. Moses was not a king and he had no army to exact obedience to his order. Therefore, he told them: Jehovah would help them and take them to a land flowing with milk and honey. Where reason would have failed, the mystical device succeeded and enabled Moses to retain the leadership despite the fact that the followers were reduced to miserable plight during the many years of wandering before they reached the promised land—Palestine.

Moses undertook a noble mission and carried it out with rare determination. But the element of altruism in his



mystical belief was not an altruism for the human race; it was restricted to the men whom he undertook to liberate, as we shall presently see. Before he set out with his followers to move on to the new land, he meditated for forty days in solitude on the top of a mountain and thought out a code of conduct for his followers. The code consisted of ten commandments of Jehovah: (1) To have no other gods than Jehovah; (2) To worship no idol or image of any kind; (3) Not to take the name of Jehovah in vain; (4) To rest every seventh day in the week and call that day Holy; (5) To honour their fathers and their mothers; (6) Never to commit murder; (7) Never to commit adultery; (8) Not to steal; (9) Not to swear falsely or give false testimony; (10) and not to envy other people and covet what they have.

These commandments were addressed by Moses to his followers, and as can be inferred from the followers' subsequent behaviour, were meant for observation among themselves, and were not intended, at any rate at that time, to be observed in the Hebrews' dealings with other people. For when the Hebrews moved into Palestine, they drove away by force the tribes settled there and made themselves masters of the land they conquered. Thus they departed with equanimity from at least three of their Prophet's commandments—Never to commit murder, Not to steal, and not to covet what other people have. And thus they left evidence that can be invoked to prove that Moses made no contribution to elevate man's mind to reason and gave no idea by which suffering caused or occasioned by man to man could be eliminated from human affairs or economic life. Therefore the evil of self-seeking at the cost of others and the monstrous form of this evil, the war, remained, and the Hebrews themselves were by turn perpetrators and victims of the evil. In the following centuries, the Hebrews, who had only been told how they should preserve their group solidarity, were not only again made slaves by their conquerors but had to suffer miserably.

Neither Zoroaster nor Moses could make the world a better place to live in than what they found it when they sat down in solitude to think new thoughts.

Like Zoroaster and Moses, Prince Siddhartha Gautam of Kapilvastu, India, who became known throughout the world as Buddha, the Enlightened One, was afflicted by the sight of suffering. His mind was terribly affected, because having been kept constantly in comfort and plea-



sure in the palace, away from pain, for about thirty years since his birth, the sight of suffering came upon him with suddenness. One day, as he was returning home from a hunting expedition with his bodyguard, Channah, he saw a man, all skin and bones, writhing in pain upon the ground. Illness Buddha must have seen and heard of before, but such a sight was the first sight of his life. Next time, he happened to see a very old man, with his back bent like a tightened bow; he was so weak that his hands trembled and he could walk with difficulty even with the aid of two canes. Such a sight was bound to excite mercy, but Siddhartha, to whom this sight too was another first experience of its kind, was mentally upset. And another day, he saw the corpse of a man, and he saw with it the weeping widow and children. He was terribly shaken.

An investigation and analysis of these sights today will be made with an approach which was usually not employed those days. Let us take up the first sight first. A man so badly ill lay on the ground in the open and not in his home; it takes one to the inference that he had no dear ones to look after him and had no economic means to support himself, and his helpless condition drove him into the open so that some one of the passersby might have mercy on him. Similarly, the old man too, bent on the two canes and made too weak by undernourishment, may have been a victim of the economic system, and if he had to move in this pity-exciting condition on the road, it was because his circumstances compelled him to do so. He may have been, it might be suggested, giving his limbs a little exercise by walking on the road; but the economic helplessness could also be a cause, and was more likely in this case. The third case was somewhat different. The death of her husband is a severe shock to a wife, and so is that of a father to children. But the feeling of pain is bound to be aggravated if death takes away not only the man but also the bread-earner, leaving the dependents in a helpless state.

If this were the approach, most ills, some of which afflicted Siddhartha, would be traced to an economic order in which some grew rich at the expense of others. But that was not the approach at that time. Zoroaster did not think of it. They regarded the king as a necessity for the community, and his costly paraphernalia was also a necessity. Siddhartha had been given a good education; he had read the *Vedas*. These sacred books prescribed



economic divisions of society, and the four broad divisions were the four social grades. Men of the lowest grade were bound to be poorer than those of the others. Poverty was thus recognised in religion. That manual workers, that is men of the fourth grade, should have the same comforts, the same economic status, as others had, was unthinkable; to think so was to think beyond the *Vedas*. The religion forbade such thinking. Men of the lowest class were condemned to be socially inferior all their life. A man distressed by others' suffering would be groping in the dark to find a solution to the suffering if he looked for the cause somewhere outside of the economic system. Those days religion dealt with man's affairs in this world as also in the other world, and since the affairs included suffering, religion naturally occurred to mind as the proper place to be scrutinised to find out whether its injunctions were all right, whether they could be modified so as to alleviate suffering. And since all that was presented as religion and as religion was supposed to be divine dispensation, one, thinking of reforms, would also seek divine light.

Siddhartha sought divine light. He was a prince and had not known suffering because he had been brought up in affluence. His affluent position in the palace had kept him ignorant of suffering, and the first reaction on his mind was one of hatred for riches, and he decided to become a monk. There were thousands of monks in India as in some other parts of the world; they had all taken to a reclusely life after the realisation had dawned upon them that the cause of mental suffering was attachment. A poor man had more worries than joys: sometime a son was ill, and the father being poor could not arrange for proper treatment; sometime his anguish at the sight of a semi-starving daughter was too distressing. There was no remedy; and the wise men prescribed detachment. One could understand detachment of mind if it did not mean detachment from responsibility; perhaps the wise men's prescription did not mean that. But often to a distressed mind, it gave an excuse to escape from responsibilities; in reality, the main cause behind the inclination which led to escapism was the economic difficulty. There were, however, monks who took to that life after they had found that they could not remain unaffected by the dishonest dealings all around them; and believing that the gates of heaven would be banged against dishonest people, they became monks, in which position alone,



as they had been told to believe, they could remain sinless and make themselves worthy for heaven. Generally, a monk, who clad and fed himself very poorly—there were exceptions to the rule no doubt—was treated reverentially by the people.

Siddhartha had no family worries; his conscience was not smitten by the inevitability of contact with dishonesty; he did not desire to ensure heaven for him after death. And still he decided to become a monk, because in that position—a position of detachment—he would be able to devote his mind to thinking with a view to finding out a remedy for man's suffering. He renounced his parents, his young wife, and his new-born child; he rendered himself completely non-attached. (It was the reunciation of a prince, and not of an ordinary man, and as long as Siddhartha would be studied and written upon, a writer's mind would be dominated by this fact.) He said to himself; 'If I could live like one of these monks, and spend all my time thinking, maybe I could learn the truth about where suffering comes from and how people ought to live in order to lead a good life. Until I discover that truth I will be unhappy.' He left home, and when he was a great distance from Kapilvastu, he shaved his head and beard as the monks did, and changed his beautiful robes with the clothes of a beggar. His bodyguard, who had accompanied him up to that distance and who was returned from there, still addressed him as prince. Siddhartha would no more have this epithet of distinction, and told him: 'I am not your Prince any more. I do not want to be a ruler over people. I want to live as one of them that I may understand how they live, and how they should live to be happy.'

He wandered on, meeting renowned teachers of the day and asking them to teach him the Wisdom of the World. They all asked him to study the Vedas; but he had already studied them and got no answer to his question, why was there suffering in the world? He starved himself some days at the instance of some monks who had told him that a man must improve his soul in order to get wisdom and that the soul could be improved by starving the body. He starved himself, as they also did, and when he found that he was nearly dead, and yet wisdom did not come, he stopped starving. And he realised that starving deprived man of whatever thinking power he possessed. At last, he realised that the wisdom he was seeking would have to come from his own mind; it was within himself, and he determined not to move from his seat under a tree



until he had produced an answer to his inquiry. And some hours later, he exclaimed, he had found the answer: 'From Good must come good, and from Evil must come evil.' It was like the answer Zoroaster had given himself. He then elaborated his finding and discussed it with learned people; they admitted him as a great thinker and called him Buddha, the Enlightened One. The Wisdom he thought out consisted of four *cardinal truths*: (1) life is suffering (2) the cause of suffering is thirst or desire; (3) the extinction of thirst leads to cessation of suffering; and (4) extinction of thirst can be achieved by the practice of (i) right belief, (ii) right aspiration, (iii) right speech, (iv) right conduct, (v) right means of livelihood, (vi) right exertion, (vii) right mindfulness, and (viii) right meditation. The five *commandments* prescribed in Buddhism are: (1) Let not one kill any living being; (2) Let not one take what is not given to him; (3) Let not one speak falsely; (4) Let not one drink intoxicating drink; (5) Let not one have unchaste sexual intercourse. Buddha's 'right belief and right conduct' included dismissal of the caste system which distinguished man from man and reduced some to a menial position. All men were equal, said Buddha, and there should be no social distinction of high and low.

The sight of disease, old age and death were the cause of Buddha's suffering when he renounced his home, but his wanderings had shown him a lot of world and given him a much broader picture of suffering. He was no more a man isolated from the masses, and the code he prepared dealt with suffering in a broad sphere. Like Zoroaster, he prescribed right means of livelihood and right exertion as the way of virtuous living. He attracted numerous people in India and other lands to his religion, but it never made an iota of change anywhere in the means of livelihood. The different devices of making money with little physical exertion or no exertion at all continued to flourish. They continued to flourish as the fountainhead of suffering.

Mahavir, the founder of Jainism, traced the suffering to the same cause and gave the ailing world the same remedy as Buddha did. He said: 'People suffer and are unhappy because they want so many things. No matter how much a man gets of food and wealth and fame, he always wants more. Desire then is the cause of all suffering.' And his *commandments* were: 'Do not kill any living thing, or hurt any living thing by word, thought, or



deed: Do not steal; Do not lie; Do not covet or desire anything.' Both Buddha and Mahavir did not believe that by prayers or sacrifice or idol-worship, man's evil deeds would be forgiven; an evil-doer would have to suffer. Jainism too, with all its potentialities, failed to turn man from the path of evil, and the suffering continued.

In China, Confucius played the role of Buddha and Mahavir, but he was a man of the world, and not an ascetic; he was for some time a Government officer, and his altruistic and wise approach to things made him popular as a righteous man and a philosopher. His approach to problems of the people was a matter-of-fact approach, not spiritual or philosophical. He said poverty could be done away with by teaching the people useful trades and occupations, by teaching them how to earn an honest living. About good conduct, his approach was similar: if the rulers were good, the people, who followed them, would also be good. If the rulers were corrupt, the people would be corrupt. He denounced renunciation as escapism, and said that man's duty was to face trouble and not to run away from it. To run away from evil was cowardice.

There was some effect of Confucius's teachings here and there, but most people, including the rulers, remained what they had always been, and there remained the same chaos in the economic life of the community. Confucius told people, 'Do not do unto others what you would not they should do unto you'. But still the poor and downtrodden continued to be made to work for the rich: the king and the dukes were as exacting as ever, perhaps more. Another Chinese philosopher, Lao-tze, a contemporary of Confucius, was so much disgusted with the rulers' selfish and dishonourable ways that he left his place for another in sheer disgust. Lao's teachings were limited in scope and in one respect quite contrary to that of Confucius. Confucius would not advise good to be paid for evil. He had his reason. If good was paid for evil, how would good be repaid? But Lao-tze, the founder of Taoism, said: 'repay injury with kindness; repay evil with good; if you did this all would be good'. But all could never become good. It was at the age of 90 that he had decided to leave his place; he had passed on his advice to many people, but there was little result.

A few centuries later, another revolutionary was born, this time among the Jews. He spoke like Lao-tze. In the life of Jews, before and after their liberation by Moses,



the days of joy were few and those of suffering many; they bore suffering patiently in the belief, which had been handed down from generation to generation, that their God Jehovah would send them a Deliverer, whom they called Messiah, and he would bring them the blessings of eternal Justice and Peace. Their wise men often consoled them in times of distress by telling them that the Messiah would soon be in their midst. And when the revolutionary arrived, they believed their hope had been fulfilled. This revolutionary was Joshua whom they called Jesus. Jesus was born to poor parents of Nazareth in Lower Galilee in the kingdom of Judea. His father, Joseph, was a carpenter. One of the religious obligations those days was the yearly pilgrimage to Jerusalem, which was over 55 miles from Nazareth. When Jesus was 12 years old, he accompanied his parents to Jerusalem to observe the Passover Feast; but unlike many other pilgrims, they had to walk the entire distance, for they did not have enough money to hire a camel or a donkey. The spectacle of some going with ease on the backs of camels or donkeys and some trudging with their things on their heads or shoulders left an indelible memory of contrast in the young mind of Jesus. And when he reached the Temple of Jerusalem, the cherished goal, he met a more disappointing sight. Around the House of God he found dealers offering for sale sacrificial sheep and oxen and haggling with pilgrims to earn as much profit as they could. There were others, who with different devices, were also exploiting the occasion for profit-making. He returned home with his faith in the Temple deeply shaken. After the death of his father, he carried on the parental profession of carpentry, but became known as an honest, thoughtful man. He interpreted the current religion in his own way, and left a mark of conviction on his listeners. He too had heard about the coming of the Messiah, John the Baptist said the same thing; nay John also told the people with him pointing to Jesus; 'There comes one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down to unloose.' After his meeting with John, Jesus went away into the desert of Judea to think about the Messiah, and remained there for forty days, praying and meditating. He returned with a thought: Brotherhood of Man and a world of Justice and Peace.

Jesus was 34 years old now. Once again he went to the Holy City of Jerusalem for the annual Feast, and again



he came across the same sight—bleating sheep and lowing oxen, their sellers and other profit-makers. That the House of God should be treated so irreverently filled him with resentment. He picked up a whip left there by a cattle dealer, and drove the cattle out. Next he went to the money-changers who were shouting to the people to come and exchange their coins for the currency of Jerusalem, and overturned their tables. He told them all with a loud voice: 'Take these things hence! Make not God's House a market place'. Jesus could not tolerate the sight of profit-makers at the seat of God. To him riches were sin and poverty virtue: riches came from the exertion and starvation of the poor.

He addressed meetings and explained his ideas which he put forth as man's true religion. He gave more definite shape to these ideas while speaking before a multitude on a hill near Capernaum; it has since been known as the *Sermon on the Mount*. In that sermon Jesus said:

'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

'Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

'Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

'Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.'

He went on: 'resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.' And Jesus became known as Christ, the Anointed One.

This teaching of submission to the evil-door is strikingly different from what Jesus himself did outside the Temple of Jerusalem. He showed a different way there; he used his physical strength and a whip to strike at the evil. Now he said, as some other prophets before him had said: 'Therefore all things whatsoever he would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law of the prophets.' At the Temple, what Jesus did was the dictation of an impulse at whose background was hatred for the way people made easy profits often without any physical exertion. If he had carried that impulse further, he might have told people to stand up against that way and resist all practices that compelled them to share fruits



of their labour with non-working men. Such an advice would have been treated as an incitement to violation of the law of the land, and not a religious advice. Jesus was now venerated as prophet; he was treated as a greater thinker than what he was when he visited the Temple. What he sought to achieve at the Temple by the use of his physical strength would, he now thought, be achieved by his wise words if the people followed them. Never before had words produced the desired result, and the Sermon on the Mount too remained ineffective proving once again that however lofty a teaching might be, it would not prevent lazy and comfort-loving people from exploiting others' labour. (Christ did not advise violation of the law; yet the annoyed priests interpreted his utterances as violation, demanded punishment for him, and had him crucified.)

Five hundred and seventy years after the birth of Christ, Mohammed was born in Mecca, and when he was a grown man he declared himself and was accepted by many people in the neighbourhood as a prophet. The Meccans had remained unaffected by Judaism and Christianity, and still worshipped idols, as many as 360, one for each day of the year; (the Arab year is of 360 days). People in different parts of Arabia had different kinds of idols to worship. The Arabs generally remained unaffected by Judaism and Christianity because the conquering nations of these two religions did not go to Arabia. Mohammed was the first man of vision and ambition to have contact with the lands of Judaism and Christianity, and was powerfully influenced by the belief in one God and by the reason that idols were pieces of stone and not Gods. As a boy he was a shepherd's helper; when he grew older, he became a camel driver. It was as a camel driver, leading caravans laden with Arabian products to Egypt, Persia and Syria, that he came in contact with Jews and Christians. And it was as a camel driver that he came in contact with Khadijah, the widow of a wealthy merchant, carrying on export and import business (15 years senior to him), and married her. The knowledge of the Old and New Testaments he gained in his travels and the riches of Khadijah were a happy combination for Mohammed. Years rolled by and he went ahead with his business, but he had constantly been disturbed by one thought: the people of Mecca, nay of Arabia, were living in a bad way. They were not only idol worshippers, but they were given to excessive drinking and gambling. Mohammed (after 15 years of his married life) made a resolve to reform the people. One



day he told his wife that as he sat reflecting on the fate of his people, it seemed to him that the angel Gabriel came to him delivering him a message from Heaven. He passed on this story to the people and presented himself as their God-chosen Prophet. He told them: 'There is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is the Prophet of Allah.' He was ridiculed, but he went ahead with his mission with a firm determination. He invoked to his aid Abraham, to whom both the Jews and Arabs trace their ancestry, and reminded them how that ancestor had destroyed the idols in his father's house. He preached against drunkenness and gambling also.

Any reform that is a departure from a traditional faith is liked by some and resented by others. Those who resented Mohammed's teachings plotted to kill him, and he fled to Yathrib, (he was 53 years old now). In Yathrib, he was received with open arms and the city itself was renamed Medina, City of the Prophet. For the first time, Mohammed was conscious of a big following—he could not get it in Mecca—and wished the people of Medina to accept him as their uncrowned ruler, maker of their laws, leader of their armies, and judge of all their affairs. How could he accomplish the wish? The answer was through an army, and he organised one. And where was money to come from to maintain an army? He went to the edge of the desert to meditate, and returning to his followers told them that he heard angel Gabriel telling him that they should get money by waylaying the caravans carrying goods from Mecca to foreign lands. This was done, and an army was raised. But the merchants of Mecca would not tolerate continued waylaying, and sent an army to punish Mohammed and his followers. Mohammed's men were worsted, and the Meccan army mistakenly believing that he had been killed returned home. When the waylaying was resumed, they made another attack, but this time Mohammed faced them with a larger army and defeated them. The victorious army now proceeded to Mecca, and Mohammed stopping his camel before the idol Habal, said: 'Truth is come and falsehood is fled away'; and at once his men pulled down the idol and smashed it to pieces. In this way, Mecca was made home of One God, Allah, on the debris of the 360 idols.

Mohammed now turned his eyes towards other lands, and asked his followers to spread his faith, Islam, with the sword. He declared: 'I, last of the Prophets, am sent with a sword. The sword is the key to heaven and hell;



all those who draw it in the name of the Faith will be rewarded.' The sword succeeded, and within three years Mohammed had under his rule all Arabia and many neighbouring territories. Paradoxically, the descendents of those upon whom Islam was forced became its ardent crusaders; later on persuasion too made a sizeable contribution.

Thus we would see that Mohammed, unlike other Prophets, was not urged forward by a sight of economic distress. He was a religious reformer; he did not begin his career with an impulse of dislike towards those who made easy money. It was enough for him if the rich had mercy on the poor. He said: 'Be kind to the poor and give alms'. Charity has a definite place in Islam. 'My teachings,' he said 'are simple': 'Give up idolatry; Do not steal; Do not lie; Do not slander; And never become intoxicated.'

Islam was the first religion whose founder became a ruler and which combined political authority with religion. That being the main characteristic of Islam, Mohammed's followers used that religion to extend the area of their political power; and while doing so they came in clash with the followers of Christianity. Christ did not prescribe use of sword; in fact, he gave a contrary sermon. But Christ, like other prophets who preceded him, could not bring about any general change in human nature and the economic structure of society. The instinct of profit-making by individuals and groups of individuals did not abate, and invasion of one territory by another continued as ever. Now the Mohammedans were to do that with greater vigour. Some of the followers of Christ, in early periods, endeavoured to live up to the ideals set forth by their Master. They treated the sick and the poor with kindness and generosity. Some worked hard, even sold themselves into slavery, and helped, with the money they received, those in distress. They were true to their faith, and were prepared to suffer for it. Believing in one God, the Christian subjects of the Roman Emperor refused to observe the prevalent custom of worshipping the Emperor, and were brutally persecuted. But later on, Christians themselves began to persecute others as also their own fellows. In the following centuries the followers of the two faiths, Christianity and Islam, played havoc. Christ, who asked his followers not to resist evil and to turn the 'other cheek also' to the smiter, was completely undone; they committed heinous crimes in the name of spreading and maintaining Christianity. Their motive was self-aggrandisement, as it was that of Mohammedans.



## Chapter IX

### VIOLENCE OF RELIGION

Both Christianity and Islam, instead of being used as remedies to lessen human misery and exploitation of the general mass of people by some on higher rungs of society, were employed as new weapons to gain new territories, to get more slaves, and to seek additional means of comfort and 'honour'. Both, in effect, put greater burden on the sagging shoulders of the poor down-trodden. This result was inevitable because none of the several religions that the world had got prescribed a code of conduct for those, including the rulers, who had been living on the labours of others. The religious injunctions were voluntary, and while the poor tried to follow them, the rich ignored them.

The martyrdom of Christ—his torturous death by crucifixion—was a very powerful factor in shaking up many people emotionally, and quite a number of them resolved to devote their lives to spreading the Master's teachings; it served as a floodlight in making the teachings look more vivid. The Roman Empire was in those days the biggest landscape of the traditional economy in which many worked for the few, and Rome attracted people from different lands. The Empire consisted of peoples observing different faiths, and it was because of this fact that the authorities tolerated them with indifference. Rome, therefore, enjoyed freedom of speech; this liberty can be properly appreciated only when it is borne in mind that it facilitated fulfilment of the main object of the beneficiaries of the empire, which was economic.

To return to the point, Christian preachers in the Empire were as free to propagate their faith as others. But Christianity was different from other different faiths of idol worship. While the preachers of the latter did not dabble in man's economic life and regarded the status quo as the natural rule of life, the Christians extolled poverty and looked down upon riches. The Christian preachers were awfully poor; they gave away whatever they had and preferred to remain poor. The average priest was rich, and maintained his sources of income. The Christian preachers narrated dreadfully how men not living according to the standards prescribed by Christ would be punished



when they would be presented before God. That amassing riches was such a dreadful thing had never been told by anybody before; if this were the rule of life, there would have been no Roman Empire. To parade poverty, that is the earning of livelihood by dint of labour as a means of redemption, appeared rather interesting to people who were enjoying the fruits of an empire built up by a different method. In order that their faith might replace others, the Christians said in their public speeches that their God alone was the ruler of Heaven and Earth. This being their belief, they would not abide by the prevalent custom of worshipping or paying homage to the emperor; they would refuse to obey orders asking them to join the army. They were men of unshakable convictions, and when the Roman magistrates threatened to punish them, they reiterated the belief that as long as they pleased God in Heaven by their words and deeds, they would not care what happened to them in this world. By showing riches in lurid light and by their own example of poor living, they had already irritated the old priestly class. So the Christians were victims of the Romans' wrath. Many of them were killed or lynched; the Christians refusing to fight back made their victimisers' task easy.

Christianity was, at this cost, making some headway, and when Rome was subjected to continuous invasions by Teutons, called a wild tribe by historians, it made further progress. The Teutons were impressed by the Christian preachers' gospel, and embraced their religion. They made a glorious gain when Constantine, the Emperor of Rome also entered the pale of Christianity. He did so to gain the support of the Christians whose number had by now increased, and whose sincerity was dependable. It is said that once when he was nearly defeated by his enemies, he developed a new mood of mystical faith and told the Christians that if he won the war, he would become Christian. He won the war, and declared Christianity to be the state religion throughout the Empire. The Christians hailed the declaration as a great event. It was great indeed, because it brought about a union between the Church and the State, and the Bishops, called Popes (from the Latin word meaning Fathers), rose to a position of great authority in the Empire.

This marked the beginning of the extension of Christianity to new lands, and also incidentally of the degeneration of Christ's preachings, of undoing the gospel in the name of Christ. The degeneration can be roughly divided



into two sections: (1) the doings of the Popes as Spiritual and Temporal authorities; and (2) Crusades against the rising political and religious power of the followers of Islam.

In the fourth century of the Christian era, the Christians became a power to be reckoned with in the Roman Empire. Centuries rolled by, and the Pope of the Church of Rome, the supreme church in the Empire, became more powerful than the Emperor. He was called the Vicar of Christ, and was styled as 'Prince over all the Nations and Kingdoms'. Presenting himself and being regarded by the people as God's representative on earth, he exercised his control over spiritual and temporal affairs of man. He could make and promulgate any law he wished. By one of his laws, he required the people to pay him a portion of their earnings. He grew enormously rich, and maintained his own armies. Without feigning to be enjoying the authority of God and Christ, the former rulers of the Empire were tolerant to different faiths and allowed people to read and preach whatever they liked; but with full claim to such an authority, the Pope decided what the people should read and what they should not read, and enforced his decisions by law. Those who disobeyed him asserting their right to decide such things for themselves were severely punished. Few rulers in the world were so ruthless autocrats as the successive Popes. About the 13th century, the Popes invented a new torture for their victims. It is known as *The Inquisition*. It is one of the most horrifying practices conceived by the devil in man. Those who refused to accept Christianity, were tortured until they died; even children and women were not spared. Time was when some of the early Christian preachers in Rome were killed, even thrown before lions to be devoured by them; but now the torture practised under the *Inquisition* by the Christians themselves was more cruel. Then the Christians preferred to die for their faith; now they tortured to death those who, like them, stuck with similar resoluteness to their faith. The custodians of the noble teachings of Christ now possessed the power to commit heinous crimes: they had acquired tremendous power of the sword. With the huge amounts of money they collected with the sword, they reduced people to the position of cows and goats who could not protect themselves. The *Inquisition* lasted over two hundred years, and during this period thousands of people were tortured to death. What a torture! The victims were put on a slow fire and burnt alive or they were cut to pieces by instru-



ments or they were crushed to death under heavy weights. The Inquisition was used even against Christians who showed courage in making an utterance against the cruel rule of the Pope or in believing in things the Pope did not sanction. Some honest Christians, who carried their protest against the cruelties of the Inquisition to the extent of publishing books exposing the inhumanities of the Pope, were also put into the Inquisition torture chamber and done to death.

For two hundred years the Inquisition tortured thousands and kept millions under its terror, and it will be a poor consolation, in fact self-deception, to say that Justice prevailed in the end, when men like Martin Luther challenged it, and an urge for reform swept over Europe. One may be constrained to cry out that had Jesus remained a carpenter, quietly doing his work, and not given birth to a new religion, there would have been no Popes to exercise, in the name of Christianity, unprecedented power to suppress and crush men. Before Christianity assumed the ruling authority, the share of the gang called government in the earnings of the people was much smaller than what it rose to be under the Pope's rule. The Pope reduced the men, exercising temporal authority, to a pitiable state. If ever any one of the emperors did anything that was interpreted by the Pope as defiance of his authority, he and his people were excommunicated. Between birth and death, many ceremonies were performed according to the prescriptions laid down by the Church, and an order of excommunication meant boycott of the ceremonies by the priests who presided over them and consequently their forced suspension. The successive Popes invoked this power often, and there could not be a worse mental torture to the people affected than the paralysis of the social life thus caused.

These events bring us to the sixteenth century of the Christian era. We would have to go a few centuries back to have a glimpse of the other manifestation of religions, of Christianity in particular. This was the Holy Crusades.

Mohammed, as already stated, used the sword to spread his faith, and if his followers did the same thing, they could claim that they made no departure from the teachings of their Prophet. That the killing of innocent people and destruction of their property, inevitable in a war, can never be justified if judged according to simple rules of moral justice, is a truth which cannot be shadowed by the sword even if it is lifted in the name of religion. It would therefore be a perversion to argue that Christians were



wrong in employing sword because their Prophet prescribed that evil should not be resisted, and that Mohammedans were right in so doing because their Prophet permitted its use. But when the respective followers of the two Prophets came into clash, Christian leaders used the usual methods of the Church.

In the course of the centuries after the death of Mohammed in 632 A.D., the Mohammedans extended their religious and political authority far and wide, and Jerusalem, with its Holy Temple sanctified by the association of Jesus with it, also came under their possession. In the year 1095, the Pope took up the cause of the Holy Land of Jerusalem. He said at the council of Clermont in France that the Mohammedans had desecrated all landmarks in that land sacred to the Christians and inflicted upon it terrible horrors. He gave a call for the deliverance of Jerusalem, and exhorted the knights of France and the people of Europe in general to leave their homes and join in the holy cause. A Christian enthusiast, named Peter the Hermit, carried on a campaign in France, rousing the people to constitute themselves into crusading armies and win back the glory of their religion that was Palestine. A powerful consideration that motivated the Pope to turn the people's minds towards Jerusalem was economic. Europe was then in the grip of unemployment and hunger. Methods of agriculture were still primitive, and the little income of the toiling classes had been burdened with the ever-mounting load of Church taxes, Government taxes, and the devices of other designing people. There was widespread discontent threatening to break into riots. Western Asia was then in a better economic condition and an excellent field to feed immigrants. The Pope hoped that if the unemployed and hunger-stricken people were taken in with his stirring call, their minds would be diverted from discontent and its expression in disturbances at home to a distant land. But already Peter the Hermit had made deliverance of Palestine a mission of his life, and on his exhortation many people did so.

So the people of Europe, groaning under the weight of their Church and other pillars of governmental and feudal authorities, were galvanised, not by any force of reason, but by religious hysteria, and thousands of enthusiastic believers, abandoning their vocations, joined the Crusade. The defaulting bankrupts, penniless noblemen and fugitives from justice also followed them. The Christian priests had defined in their own way what was sin, and their declaration that those who enlisted in the army of the Crusades would have their



sins forgiven, induced thousands of 'sinners' to offer themselves for the 'holy' cause. They all proceeded to march to Palestine, and the story of a great sin now began to unfold itself. Ill-equipped, they soon came to misery, and were forced to beg or steal and commit other crimes. Their criminal conduct in the way infuriated the local people who killed them by hundreds. Since the Crusade was directed against non-Christians, the Crusaders killed all the Jews they came across. The Crusaders never reached the cherished land, and about ninety per cent of them were killed in the way.

In the failure of the first Crusade, the Pope lost nothing; he made no sacrifice and enjoyed as ever the immense amount of pleasures he had collected around him. But he kept alive the spirit to conquer Palestine, and he exploited it as another instrument to fleece the people. As already stated, those who offered themselves for the Crusade were freed from sin and promised heaven; the Pope extended this privilege even to those who did not join the Crusade but made a sacrifice of money and paid it into the Pope's treasury. This transaction was called buying *Indulgences*. The Pope's new device was reduced to a arithmetic formula and a business commodity. Lists were prepared of the 'sinners' and their sins, and the price of *Indulgences* was higher according to the number of sins. With the number of buyers increasing, middlemen of the trading class entered the business, and they sold indulgences on behalf of the clergy for a commission of thirty-three and a third per cent. The device of *Indulgences* was later on used by the Pope for other purposes also than the Crusade. For example, if he decided to build a big church, he would send out agents to sell *Indulgences* all over the Christian world. That the sale of *Indulgences* was generally not forced on the people and that the people went in for them in order to get a clean certificate for admission into heaven after death shows that as late as the 11th and 12th centuries, the mass of the people in Europe did not possess a rational mind to question the devices of machinators, and blindly submitted to them. (In other parts of the world, masses behaved similarly, though the methods of religious exploitation differed from region to region.)

Thus *Indulgences* became a component part of the Crusade, and the continuance of the Crusade became necessary for maintaining *Indulgences* as a big source of the Pope's revenues. Unlike the first Crusade, the second was an orderly one; an army of 200,000 was equipped



with the beguiled devotees again playing the leading role. After a whole year's preparations, the Crusaders started on their mission, and after killing all the Muslims who fell into their hands, stormed and seized Jerusalem and massacred the Muslim population. But their victory was short-lived. The Muslims strengthened themselves with fresh troops and recaptured Jerusalem, and in their turn killed the Christians. During the next two centuries, seven crusades were launched, and each time there was tremendous loss of life, and people were put to all manner of misery and privation. Yet they all failed and Palestine remained under the banner of Islam. The Pope and the beneficiaries from his despotic methods had no reason to repent; to them the Crusades were profitable, to the people they were ruinous.

More than fourteen centuries had rolled by since Jesus gave new religious prescriptions, but the old way of life was continuing. There were wars and there were brutal killings; slavery and serfdom were still prevalent. The Christian warriors would, in the morning, vow all kinds of oaths about mercy and charity, and in the evening, they would murder their prisoners. The so-called Knights of the Middle Ages were proud that they were good Christians, and boasted they helped sufferers, But they would have a different conscience for Muslims whom they killed; Muslims were killed not because they had done the Christians any harm, but because they belonged to a different Faith. When Europeans spread over East Asia as conquerers, many of them carried out their religious propaganda by fire and sword, and compelled helpless people to become Christians. In India, for example, the Portugues, who were the first to secure through deceitful actions a little political power, terrorised the people under their domination to embrace Christianity. They said they were under an obligation to the Pope for propagating the Catholic faith in all new lands they discovered. They brought with them the prevalent evils which were usually perpetrated by invaders in Europe. One of these evils was the slave trade. They established depots for the purchase of slaves. They carried off whole villages into slavery, and were especially delighted in capturing marriage processions. The poor wretches were kidnapped and sold as slaves at the daily auctions on the Exchange.

The conquests, which the Europeans made in the East through treachery, deceit and killing were used by



Christian preachers as God-sent opportunities to increase the number of the 'followers' of Jesus. The conquerors made great gains by subjugating millions of people and by systematically appropriating a large part of their earnings. This great wrong, a crime against the teachings of Christ, never troubled the souls of Christian missionaries. Devoid of reason, they seemed to believe that as a big empire was a means of big gains to the conquerors, so a big list of 'followers' would make Christ in heaven happy. They strongly believed that every new convert that they made added to their credit account in heaven, and thus they ensured there a place for themselves. Perhaps they never realised—pitiable men—that they were neither carrying out the command of their Lord nor were they pleasing God, and that in reality an activity that could expose or check the exploitation of the poor by the conquerors would have been in keeping with the teachings of their Prophet.



## Chapter X

### THINKERS AND ECONOMIC LIFE

We have seen how the sight of a glaring disparity between the rich and the poor left a deep impression on the mind of Jesus at a tender age when he was covering on foot the long distance to go to the Holy Temple of Jerusalem. He exercised his mind, and produced some thoughts which, he believed, would make men hate riches and substitute dignity of labour for easy means of making money. After his martyrdom he was declared a Prophet, and his ideas and teachings were reduced to writing. If Jesus had not made spreading his ideas a mission of his life and left them locked up in his mind, he would not have been known today. In all ages, there have been men who transcended the traditional beliefs of Fate, and felt that the cause of human misery was the parasites who fed themselves fat on others' labour. Those men may have discussed their feelings and thoughts with their fellow beings, but did not propagate them. Belonging to the exploited class, they were uneducated and could not write out what they felt and thought. The capacity to write is not a prerequisite to thinking, but a man who can write leaves an account of his thoughts for posterity, while one who cannot write takes his thoughts to the grave to be buried with him. Men like Plato and Aristotle, who belonged to the class of the so-called 'free citizens', as different from slaves, wrote out their thoughts and are honoured even today as great thinkers. A slave may have entertained different feelings and different thoughts, but he did not possess the power of writing and did not have enough leisure at his disposal. This slave and Plato and Aristotle belonged to two different social and economic classes, and their feelings and thoughts were bound to be different. The lack of the power of expression and the lack of the will as also the opportunity to make his ideas known, left the slave a dumb animal. And we find in the political and economic philosophy of Aristotle, who was more conscious of the practical side of life than his predecessor Plato, utter lack of consideration for the majority of the people, the slaves; he would like the economic superstructure conceived by him to be put upon the



existing economic structure in which the slave was a necessity.

Aristotle was a revolutionary thinker of his age, but he could not wholly liberate his mind from the shackles of an economy in which he belonged to the class of 'free citizens', the exploiters of the slave's labour; he would not think of a structure in which all men could be socially equal. The Greeks of those days took pride in their political institutions. They were right, because in contrast with other peoples in the neighbourhood, they governed themselves in a better way. A Greek city republic had two kinds of inhabitants: 'free citizens' and slaves, the latter outnumbering the former at the rate of five or six to one. The free citizens were the descendants of the local people, while slaves were foreigners. All free citizens constituted an assembly which discussed and decided public matters; the slaves were not allowed to take part in this assembly. Often some slaves were economically better off than some free citizens, but they descended from the parents who were originally employed for manual work, and though, as the generations passed, they were tolerated taking up other professions, they would not be allowed the political status enjoyed by the free citizens. As the Greek city republics had slaves, other peoples too had their slaves; the Greeks' distinctiveness in which they took pride lay in the fact that they enjoyed a system of people's government, while others lived under despotism and autocracy. Plato and Aristotle would not concern themselves with the system that discriminated between the inhabitants and excluded the majority from the prideful political system, and devoted their thinking to how that system could be improved upon. A thinker of the slave class would have given a different philosophy.

Nevertheless, Plato and Aristotle are ancient thinkers whose rational approach to social and economic life of the community can be taken as a starting point of rational thinking in subsequent ages. Plato's ideas might be brushed aside as impracticable, but the rational approach that runs through them like butter in milk cannot be ignored; it has got to be accepted as a basic approach. When men have private property, he says, 'they will spend their whole lives, hating and being hated, plotting and plotted against'. But he restricted the application of this truth only to the Guardians of his conception—men who would be trained as rulers. He would like the rulers to be a class of men who would have no families, no property



and no attachment that made man ambitious. He would, it may be inferred, leave the economic and social life of the rest of the people as it was. We need not be concerned here with whether his proposal was practicable or not; what is of concern to us is that ambition, according to Plato, was an evil, which would vitiate a ruler in his functioning as such. If ambition and its product—property—were bad for a ruler, they must be bad for every body. There is no doubt difference in a ruler and a subject; the former has more opportunities of promoting his ambition than the latter. But if ambition is an evil, why should it at all be allowed in a lower degree; in other words, why should it be denied to the few rulers and why should it be allowed to the many 'free citizens' and slaves. Plato was concerned with an efficient and clean administration, and therefore he devoted his thinking mainly to the Guardians—how they should live in order to be clean and efficient rulers. But his thought that property was an evil came to stay and was dealt with more elaborately by his critical disciple, Aristotle.

Aristotle, in his thought process, which remained largely attached to the existing state of economy and society, associated sanctity (of his conception) with property. To him property and the family were the principal contents of a state; there would be no state without these. To deprive a man of private property was to rob him of the natural incentive to work, and to work better. And he would not think of a free citizen's family without slaves. He argued: some men were born to be slaves and some to be masters. Nature, according to Aristotle, did not create all men mentally and physically equal. Those who came to be made slaves by the accident of war posed a question. He answered it not by reason but by justifying legal and conventional slavery. What, however, is relevant to us here is the thought which was the product of his rational approach to society's affairs. He would not like anybody to increase his private possessions by money-making at the expense of his fellow men. He condemned usury. He said: 'Usury is most reasonably detested, as it is increasing our fortune by money itself, and not employing it for the purpose it was originally intended, namely exchange.' Similar, in his scheme of things, was the position of retail trade. Money-making by these devices deprived men of part of the earnings they made by physical and mental exertion and offended against the justice of the barter system. This thought—a realization



which most people in those days missed—cannot be swept away with the rejectable material in Aristotle's theory, and cannot be ignored merely because he did not deplore the social privileges of his class.

The potential factor—the city state with its free citizens and slaves—that fettered the scope of Aristotle's thinking collapsed in the third century B.C. with the disappearance of the city states into Alexander's empire. In the vast political unit, the Greeks could not maintain themselves as a distinct entity different from the so-called barbarians. In the second century B.C., Greece became a Roman province, finally losing her political independence. The thinking men of Greece now developed a spirit of resignation, and drifted into stoicism: that became their new political philosophy. They made a rational approach to life. Love, hatred, sorrow and joy were the product of emotions and not of reason; therefore, they said, 'banish joy, banish fear, put hope also to flight, and let no grief be present'. This state of mind was the surest way to liquidate ambition; where ambition did not exist, there would be no exploitation of man by man. This approach was elaborated lucidly in what the Stoics called natural laws. They recalled the age—the so-called primitive age—when all men were equal; social and economic disparities did not exist then. They would like to revert to what they believed to be an ideal society of the old. The men whose nation was a city state, divided into free citizens and slaves, now aspired for one great community of the world in which all men should be equal. Seneca, one of those who introduced Greek Stoic ideals to the Roman world, declared that human nature had been corrupted by the lust for personal possessions, and thus turned away from the golden age of the natural law which once existed. This lust, he suggested, would have to be restrained by political society which itself was the result of the corrupted human nature.

Such thinking is possible only when the mind is detached from the surroundings in which ambition is a broad fact of life, and in which there is empire, and there is private property.

But when it is attached to the surroundings, it does not criticise them but justifies them. The Roman jurists first held that the will of the people as a whole was the real source of all political authority; but when the empire came up, they shifted their thinking to justifying the position of the emperor. They said an emperor enjoyed



the absolute right to demand unlimited obedience from the people. His will was law; even if an emperor was irresponsible and non-moral, he stood above the people, and the welfare of the people was not his duty but merely his pleasure. Even St. Paul, who lost his life for his convictions as a Christian, was as irrational as the jurists in upholding the position of a ruler. Urging obedience to the existing political authorities, Paul told people that all governments were established by God; to disobey the ruler was to disobey God. He held the custom of slavery as contrary to natural law, because all men were created equal and free. But sandwiched as he was between expediency and honest preaching—in expediency he supported the existing order and in honest preaching he said what came to be regarded as treason by the rulers—he would not condemn slavery. On the contrary, he asked runaway slaves, who had been emboldened to become free by the Christian message of equality, to return to their masters. He justified this advice in the name of religion; the real slave was one who surrendered his soul to the lusts and desires of the flesh; the external condition, whether it was free or in bondage, was immaterial. He consoled slaves by saying that the external condition of slavery was imposed as a discipline by God for the good of the slave's soul.

These arguments, apparently contradictory of Christianity, smack of reluctance to cross the border line of fear of the ruling authority. They denied the mind not only free thinking but also access to Christ's teachings. For centuries, the church tolerated slavery with equanimity. Strangely enough, while the Stoics talked like Christians, the Christians talked like hired advocates of the evil of the kingdom of earth.

But the teachings of Christ could not be undermined by the peculiar interpretations, and in different periods of the early centuries, there arose men who emphatically asserted the right interpretation. The Christian enthusiasts despised property and preferred living the life of the poor, but in the midst of private property, they could not remain wholly unaffected, and by the fifth century A.D., they accepted the prevalent general rule of life and became possessors. At this time, St. Augustine gave his interpretation about property. That interpretation may have been addressed to Christians alone and may have been treated by others as a religious affair, but it was the reiteration of the rational approach made by several



thinkers in the past, whose thinking was not influenced by religion in the accepted sense. The only difference between him and them was that he expressed himself in the usual Christian way. He said fruits of the earth belonged to all, and all had equal right to make use of them to satisfy their necessities. Each man could take from the common stock of nature just as much as he needed. Some of St. Augustine's contemporary Christians objected to almsgiving being regarded as charity; it was an act of justice because the giver was returning to the common stock what did not belong to him but belonged to it. A 'limited' private property was thus allowed. What should be the limit was not defined. The idea can be mischievously interpreted but it will remain as one making a correct approach to man's economic affairs; it was one which, if given effect to, would obviate the necessity of framing so many laws in which Roman jurists were engaged. If understood in correct perspective, it was not a religious sermon but the result of a study of the misery of thousands of years of the human race; during these thousands of years, men had achieved many things whose sum total was called civilization, but the study reminded them that at the beginning of the settled life they enjoyed greater economic justice.

This idea about private property did not take a physical form and did not possess force to take that form; it was always pushed aside by the fact of the physical existence of private property and by the force of men in power. If an empire, the private property of the emperor, enjoyed 'legal' sanction, private property of the general mass of individuals also did so. Living in this kind of world, the Christians themselves became victims of the evil of private property, and they pushed aside, with vengeance, the teaching which they had been applying to themselves with rigour and endeavouring to apply to people generally. They had started for a righteous destination, but reached a contrary one.

Christianity was making steady progress and becoming the religion of Europe. In the eleventh century greater emphasis was placed on the importance of life beyond this world than the life here. This emphasis gave the church an opportunity to claim its superiority over the secular rulers. The lasting abode of man was the one to which he went after completing the journey of his temporary stay in this world; and since the church disciplined man's life in this world in order to prepare him for heaven, it was



the best authority to look after the spiritual side as also to exercise an overbearing status in secular affairs. This plausible argument appealed to many people; men and women voluntarily abandoned their life of ease and comfort, and took the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Religious zeal produced the desired effect. The church became supreme; it completely swallowed the state. If the secular government still existed, it was because the Christian thinkers of those days said it was necessary to deal with men who were too bad to respond to the righteous preaching of Christianity and who deserved to be trained by methods employed by government. The secular government was to be tolerated as a transitional arrangement until ideal conditions were achieved.

Having prepared the people psychologically to regard the church as entitled to the most dominant position, the spiritual master (the Pope) sought to impose his authority on the worldly master (the emperor), and the result was continuous conflict between the two. Both possessed armies, and often the Pope proved superior. The Church was now proceeding towards the anticlimax of the ideal which the earlier Christian thinkers had put before the people and which many enthusiasts had been trying to apply to their own lives at the sacrifice of a comfortable living. In 1073, a new priest named Hildebrand, assumed the office of the Pope, taking the name of Gregory VII. In order to promote his aggrandisement, he gave a mischievous interpretation to the Christian belief that separate existence of the secular authority was necessary only because it dealt with evil men who did not respond to the Christian teaching; he asserted, with all the emphasis he could command that the power of princes was satanic in origin. Why should the Pope be regarded as superior to emperors and kings? Gregory's explanation was: at the Day of Judgment the Pope would be responsible for the behaviour of all the sheep of the flock, and in the eyes of God, a king was one of that faithful herd.

The wars and quarrels that ensued between Popes and kings may be skipped over to return to the main theme. Christian monasteries, which had been poor abodes for men coming to them forsaking the pleasures of secular life, and in which the ideal of austere living was strictly observed, grew in the course of a hundred years into palaces of wealth and comfort. By the thirteenth century these monasteries became storehouses of rich worldly goods into which pleasure-loving and lazy men entertained a wish



to be admitted. Christian preachers started the struggle for supremacy in order to be able to implement their preaching against the lust for private possessions in excess of bare needs, and were now masters of huge private possessions, which they accumulated by misguiding and exploiting the people and with the power of the sword. Their natural law, which appeared to be a means to give society economic justice, was set at naught in one of the most brutal and despicable ways known to history.

Men, once enjoying clear vision to see the evils of excessive possessions, may be blinded by self-interest, as the leaders of the church were, but the glaring evil is bound to attract notice of new thinkers. After the righteous eyes of the Pope and his satellites had been blindfolded, schoolmen, the philosophers and theologians of the second half of the Middle Ages, revived the old concept about property. They however lacked the courage of conviction displayed by early Christians, and would tolerate the monasteries possessing huge properties—by the thirteenth century the monasteries possessed a considerable proportion of the property of Europe. The fact of these possessions was perhaps an unalterable fact of life to the schoolmen; therefore they said that since the righteous were the only worthy people to distribute the wealth of the common stock, there could be no better men to be its trustees than the religious, that is, only the ecclesiastics were fit to administer the common stock. Thomas Aquinas, who was inspired in his thought process by Aristotle, said more definitely than his fellow schoolmen that the wealth of nature existed for the benefit of the whole community; like his inspirer, he also condemned usury. And he, in his turn influenced the Church, which began interfering with cases where small men were exploited by wealthy men earning interest from them. But this interference, while beneficial to small men, caused no concern to large-scale trading activities that were responsible for greater accumulation of private possessions. The evil that men of the church and many others were perpetrating remained intact; and the only contribution the schoolmen made was that they enabled the thought about private property to sustain itself with a fresh supply of blood into its veins.

The church, whose possessions were not questioned by the schoolmen, now itself came up to focus, in an inverse manner, people's attention on the thought about property. The schoolmen justified the stupendous wealth of the church and monasteries on the plea that they alone could



act as trustees. The question that naturally arose in the minds of men of commonsense was whether these trustees were functioning as such. The answer was, no; it was evident like daylight that the wealth of the church and monasteries was mainly used for the benefit of the clergy themselves, and not the poor. In the beginning of the fourteenth century, Dobois drew pointed attention to this fact by saying that the sons of noblemen became monks so that they might obtain the revenues of priories which were a great source of wealth. Many men now openly deplored the extravagant and evil ways of the church. The wealth of clergy was often attacked in the English Parliament in the fourteen century. There were similar indications of dissatisfaction in France. Writers courageously suggested that the clergy should be deprived of their property.

But as the friction and wars between the kings and the clergy increased and the disturbance of peace had an agonising effect on men's minds, attention shifted from the church's wealth to what was regarded as the basic question: who should wield secular power? The answer the contemporary writers produced—it was in fact the answer the people gave themselves—was that the Pope should cease to be the supreme authority in secular matters and concern himself only with spiritual ones. Some recalled the days of the Roman empire under one secular head, and suggested reversion to an empire of the entire Europe, nay of the entire world. Thinking men were groping for a better method to ensure peace. Peace became an all-absorbing issue and understandably suppressed the thought and question about wide disparities in earthly possessions. All that men now aspired was the peace that existed before the Pope ascended to unparalleled supremacy. Religion and church still occupied a place in man's mind, but they showed ready receptivity to the thinkers' rational approach that secular affairs should be separated from spiritual. There was nothing new in this rational approach; the position it aimed at once existed; the approach looked rational now because the experience of the combination of the two functions proved miserable and made common people poorer and deprived them of the peace of mind. The rational approach included, within its scope of thinking, ideals like liberty and justice. But liberty and justice too were to be of the old order; these were not intended to be employed to undo the economic wrong created by mischievous devices and force. And people got the little



they aspired; the secular authority of the Pope gradually declined and then disappeared, and the kings were restored to their former position.

With the disintegration of the Pope's supreme authority, the wish for territorial independence of different principalities developed into national spirit. In place of the Emperor or the Pope ruling over different states, this spirit conceived of different nations, strong nations, that might defend themselves. There was political instability, and there was this new spirit. Thinking therefore became confined to these two. Europe was passing through a new phase in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and new ideas—in fact those were not wholly new and already existed once in the Greek city states and had been dilated upon with new thoughts by Aristotle—made their appearance. The Italian Machiavelli dealt with the situation as he studied it in historical perspective and put forth his ideas in a systematic way. There was no occasion to devote attention to economic affairs of man; therefore Machiavelli steered clear of the thoughts about private possessions, and confined himself to political exigencies, to thinking out ways that could make a nation-state secure and its administration efficient and popular. Machiavelli's greatest concern about man's affairs in the state was security, which could be guaranteed only by good government—security to enjoy his property and family life. The selfish nature of man, he said, was always 'bent to mischief', and sought its own end to the detriment of others. Security was therefore a vital part of the functions of a government. He did not believe that a government, where the authority resided in a single individual, would always be a good government. He would like the monarch's power to be balanced by the senate's and the senate's by the people so that all would be concerned in the authority of the government. He asserted: 'I say that the People is wiser and more staid, and of more exact judgment than a Prince. And therefore not without cause the People's voyce is likened to God's voyce; for we see that the universal opinions bring to pass rare effects in their pressages, so that it seems by their secret virtues they foresee their own good or evil.' Despite the mystical way of its presentation, this idea—the people's superiority to the prince and their right to be final arbiters—was to become the basis of the form of government in future in most countries. It was given at a propitious time in the life of Europe. It opened out the possibility of people



exercising their political power to give themselves economic justice by reconstructing the economic structure.

But Europe was yet entangled in religious controversies with numerous sects possessing diverse views. Religion, in its degenerated state and as victim of numerous interpretations of what was called the law of God, was still the most disturbing single factor to the peace. In England, in the early years of the seventeenth century, these interpretations divided members of Parliament, each claiming for his section a divine institution. Living for hundreds of years under a system in which religion had been playing havoc and had dominated man's affairs, the people's minds were preoccupied with it; and hot discussions could at any time lead to a civil war. When such is the state of social life, Liberty is frowned at, and it was done by many in England. While John Milton passionately pleaded, 'Give me the Liberty to know, to utter and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties', there were men quite well-meaning, who urged that the flood of liberty must be stemmed. Prudent men were exercising their minds anxiously to finding out a way by which men could be assured security and peace. While people were divided between religious interpretations, the kings believed that they possessed the divine power to rule as they pleased. Thomas Hobbes, one of the eminent writers of those days, produced several works on law and politics, in which he concluded that there should be absolute sovereignty divorced from religion. He suggested that the state, and not religion, must determine moral values and enforce them through laws. That is, there should be the rule of secular law, enforced by a sovereign free from religious influences in his public conduct.

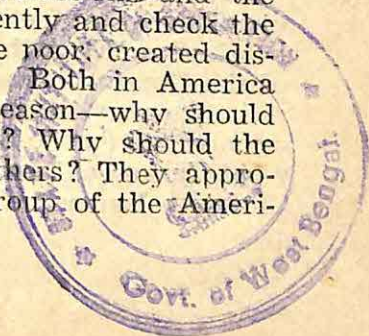
Then came John Locke. He came at a time when liberty had caught people's imagination. first religious liberty, then its offshoot, the political liberty; and the king experienced difficulties in his exercise of absolute authority. The source material of Locke's study was the situation as it existed, and he suggested sovereignty of the people as the best rule to ensure peace and good government. It was democracy, the rule of majority. The ideal he sought to achieve was; 'no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions.' And he argued it thus: 'men being all the workmanship of one omnipotent and infinitely wise Maker, all the servants of one sovereign Master, sent into the world by His order and about His business, they are His property, whose workmanship they



are made to last during His, not one another's, pleasure'.

In his usual religious way, Locke approached the question of property also. He attempted to rationalise the approach adopted by several thinkers who preceded him and who too were considerably influenced by religion. He began by referring to the time when there was no private property. How did man make private property? 'Whatever,' says Locke, 'he removes out of the state that Nature hath provided and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with it, and joined it to something that is his own, and thereby makes it his own.' He goes on to say: 'As much as anyone can make use of to any advantage of life before it spoils, so much he may by his labour fix a property in. Whatsoever is beyond this is more than his share, and belongs to others.' Thus he set a limit on private property: only that much could belong to a man as he acquired by his own physical effort, and what he acquired by devices of exploiting others' labour should not belong to him. Viewed from this standpoint, the world was full of economic injustice. Locke did not suggest how this injustice should be undone; he retained the notion that the law of nature should curb the greed of men and prevent exploitation of 'another's pains'. But he gave the world a theory—the 'labour theory' of value—which was bound to be taken up by serious students of economics.

Locke was one of the most powerful and revolutionary thinkers Europe has produced. His ideas influenced the course of Revolution in America in the next century. They were utilised in the French Revolution. Though the results achieved were wholly political, in the background of the American Revolution and the French Revolution and in the background of the inclination of the people of those countries towards Locke's political philosophy, there was the economic question. In America, the discontent against the British government did not arise from any religious cause; it arose from the distant rulers' policy of exploitation of the colonies. In France, the increase of privileged classes and consequent impoverishment of the peasantry and masses of other professions and the failure of the government to rule efficiently and check the widening gulf between the rich and the poor, created discontent, and the people rose in revolt. Both in America and France, men were provoked by Reason—why should they allow themselves to be exploited? Why should the fruits of their labour be shared by others? They approached the question as a group—the group of the Ameri-





cans against their exploiters in England, and the group of the poor against the rich in France. They were not provoked by any philosophy of economic justice; therefore their struggle was not against the established practices of acquisition of private possessions. The Americans would not think of the exploitation of men by men in their own midst; similarly the French did not think of evils of their economic order but were provoked by the sudden deterioration in their condition. In the tradition of the economic life of exploitation of men by men, they saw nothing wrong—they saw nothing wrong in the things as they existed. They did not take Locke's economic philosophy seriously. Only his political philosophy inspired them, and they asked for a representative government, a government in which people would elect their rulers.

Locke showed the light of reason to men groping in the dark. Other thinkers of those days also laid stress on reason in man's affairs, but concerned themselves with only a smaller fraction of it; and therefore they were able to deal with only a fraction of man's problems. The prominent among them was Rousseau. But his reasoning was different from that of men like Machiavelli and Locke. He did not like the rule of the multitude: 'How can a blind multitude, which often does not know its own mind because it seldom knows its own interest, carry out in its own strength an enterprise so vast and intricate as that of legislation?' He would like a wise man to be the lawgiver of the community. The vital part of the reason about man's affairs came to his subconscious mind, but as his mental faculty was absorbed in formulating remedies for political ills, that vital part—economic injustice—did not come up. That economic injustice and the effect it produced on a man's attitude in social behaviour affected Rousseau's mental attitude is obvious from the fact that he identified himself with the poor against the rich; he noticed that while the poor possessed some of those primitive qualities of pity and untarnished humanity, the rich trampled them underfoot in their pursuit of power and wealth. But he dismissed the feeling in the subconscious mind rather helplessly: 'Everything is good as it comes from the hand of the Creator'. The consolation he thus gave in the usual religious way to the question arising out of his own conscience and day-to-day experience of life was perversion of what Christ said and what had been elaborated by eminent Christian leaders. He too confined himself to the circum-



stances of the time, and did not extend his thinking to economic injustice because it was not the burning question of the day. Like Rousseau, Edmund Burke too associated God with his ideas and preferred the democracy of the aristocracy to that of the people, and endorsed the doctrine of *laissez-faire* in economics: 'Commerce... flourishes most when it is left to itself. It is very well able to find its own way; and its necessities are its best laws.' Christ's God condemned riches, but Burke's gave freest opportunities to the principal means of accumulating riches!

And as Europe slowly proceeded with the implementation of Locke's political ideals, Burke's God was upheld and Christ's was undermined! In fact, Christ's God was summoned to the aid of Burke's God in fulfilling big ambitions. Paradoxically, the so-called Industrial Revolution and the ambition to exploit the wealth of the East grew in Europe at the same time that did the urge for democracy. In effect Europeans adored Locke as far as his political philosophy was concerned, and discarded him as far as his economic views were concerned. Several political thinkers of the 19th century devoted their minds to elaborating different aspects of political philosophy, and produced fine thoughts: men must have freedom of expression, liberty of conscience, the right to elect their representatives to get a popular government, etc. But they ignored economic exploitation of man both inside the country and outside it in other countries. They were indifferent to this aspect of man's life; and yet they were complacent that they had given society a great gift—liberty.



## Chapter XI

### MACHINE, DEMOCRACY AND 'LAISSEZ FAIRE'

There were indications in Europe during the Middle Ages that scientific knowledge could be utilized to relieve man of much of his physical exertion and that machinery should be substituted for the primitive tools. A machine could produce as much as many men did, and as its introduction would inevitably render so many people idle, the idea was discouraged by the guilds. But an idea once born cannot be killed, even as Locke's ideas could not be killed and inspired the people in different countries years after they were written down, and machinery was bound, sooner or later, to throw out the primitive methods and take their place. The Machine Age started its career in right earnest in the 18th century with much of the preparatory work already done. Tool-making is a manual work, and so is machine-making; and a machine is more likely to be the product of a manual worker's brain than a trader's. As now, the manual workers were poor and the traders were rich when the machine made its appearance. This economic phenomenon was severely reflected in the benefits accruing from an invention: the inventor got a limited amount of money, and the trader earned a huge profit.

The inventor's lot in the early period of the Machine Age was often miserable. In the early decades of the eighteenth century, the Frenchman Denis Papin invented a little wagon, that was driven by steam, and a paddle-wheel boat. But his vessel, when he tried to take a trip in, was confiscated by the authorities who were approached by the boatmen's union with a complaint that such a craft would deprive them of their livelihood. Papin was reduced to a miserable plight; he had spent all his money on his inventions, and died in penury. Papin's steam engine was, fifty years later, improved upon by a Glasgow instrument maker, James Watt, who in 1777, gave the world the first steam engine of real practical value. And the trade earned stupendous amount of money from the invention.

Different men were applying their inventive faculties to preparing machine substitutes for different primitive



methods, and each attempt held out the threat of throwing a large number of people out of employment. But the machinery was on its legs and would not stop. The new age confronted manual workers, the poorest in every country, with a problem which they had never experienced before. They had endured the sharing of a part of the fruit of their labour by the middleman and government agencies, and had become accustomed to this exploitation; but never were they deprived of the means of their livelihood. Now when all was gone, they rose to protest, and became a problem to the rulers as to those who were exploiting the machinery's mass production for profit. At this difficult time, political thinkers came to the rescue of the exploiters. Several years before the French Revolution, Turgot, one of the unsuccessful ministers of finance of Louis XVI, preached the novel doctrine of 'economic liberty'. The country was suffering from too much red-tape, and Turgot's remedy was: 'let the people do as they please, and everything will be all right.' In this advice of 'laissez faire', the exploiters of machinery found an argument to meet attacks from the unemployed, the victims of the machine. Turgot's perverted remedy was reinforced by Adam Smith, who pleaded for 'economic liberty' to enable the people to enjoy the 'natural rights of trade.' So the 'laissez faire' of 'do what you please' variety took the field with a vengeance.

The machinery had made many unemployed and given work to the few. These few would now produce, with machine, more cloth, for example, than was produced by the many by hand; and the profits of the many would go into the pocket of the mill owner. But he was not satisfied with the huge profit and would add to it by putting his employees to excessive work. As master, he was free to take any amount of work from his servant; there was no limit prescribed by law. It often happened that an employee would be allowed to go only when he fainted from fatigue. The machine age came upon manual workers as the satan's wrath. The same men, who worked in the open and felt free, were now crowded in poorly ventilated and poorly lighted factories like prisoners. Their stay for long hours in those unhealthy buildings impaired their health and shortened their life span. The Victims of the machine civilisation most poignantly felt that they had been deprived of their independence. They had no alternative but to offer themselves to be victimised; as manual workers they could not compete with the machine, and they had to



prefer the slavery of machine to starvation in freedom.

An age of keen competition was coming up. Women and children came out to compete with men, and since they accepted lower wages they were often preferred for employment by factory owners. When the employer saw an extra profit in child-workers as against grown men, he invented devices to serve his purpose. Children of five and six were asked to be sent to the factory on the excuse that they would thus be saved from the dangers of the street and a life of idleness. An obliging parliament was used to enact a law which required the children of paupers to go and work. The children, who passed their time in play and innocent talk, were now given hard work to do. When they were tired and fell asleep at their job, the foreman making the rounds with a whip in his hand would beat them on the knuckles and bring them back to their duties. In return for their services, they got some kind of food to keep them alive and a sort of pigsty in which they could rest at night. Strenuous work, bad food, unhealthy places of work and rest, and the foreman's oppression were enough to hasten their end, and thousands died before they came of age. All this was happening in a country—England—which owned a great empire.

The agonising conditions of work under the new dispensation of 'civilisation' became the common talk of towns and villages, and feelings went up demanding remedial measures. English humanitarians like Robert Owen, Thomas Sadler, Fielden, Lord Ashley made earnest efforts for reform, and the result was the Factory Act (of 1833), which prohibited the employment in spinning and weaving factories of children under nine, and fixed a maximum of eight hours duty for children of nine to thirteen years of age and twelve hours for those from thirteen to eighteen.

Democratic thought was still struggling to move into the realm of practical politics when the machine arrived. Before the mass production devices appeared, the landed aristocracy was the elite of society, and was associated with parliaments as a class that provided the middle path between the voice of the people and that of the intelligentsia. The kings chose the middle path quite prudently; it would be easier to deal with the aristocracy than with the people's representatives whose behaviour might at any time give rise to an uneasy situation for the rulers. In Britain, the aristocracy not only owned the entire upper house, the House of Lords, but enjoyed a decisive position in the lower. But the sole right of land owners to aristocracy



was now—when the machine created a new rich class—questioned; and the factory-owners asked for representation to towns that had been denied representation in the House of Commons—it was in effect the demand for representation to the new rich class. They did not ask the principle of the middle path to be compromised; they only wanted it to be adhered to fully, and the Reform Bill of 1832 conceded their demand.

Democracy and machine seemed to be dazing the people; their psychology was changing. Time was when the men, thrown out of employment by the machine, attacked the factory-building and set fire to the machines. As time passed, they became accustomed to the new economic life in which they were yoked to the machine as an animal was to the plough; a return to the old freedom being impossible, they now demanded the same political right as was enjoyed by the landed aristocracy and the machine aristocracy. If the factory-owners had a voice in parliament, they too must have it, so that in law-making, their representatives might present their side. As human beings had always been, they were prisoners of an economic tradition. What Christ, religious thinkers and political thinkers said from time to time about possessions was not a fact of practical life; the fact was the tradition of possessions and everybody's right—mischievously called liberty—to add to them by whatever device his mind could suggest. Therefore, if the factory-workers asked for their representation in parliament, it was not to demand a position from where they could fight for economic justice, for a new economic order, but merely to improve a little their working conditions. It was rather impossible to entertain a thought for economic justice because the cart of the limited democracy was being drawn by the horse of the established economic tradition; the qualification of a voter was the possession of a certain minimum property. Thus Britain and other countries were developing a democracy in which the ill-gotten wealth was the criterion of a man's fitness to be a voter. The old economic tradition was in this way confirmed by the modern liberal thought; and by the time the franchise was extended to the entire adult population, *laissez faire* had completely taken hold of men's minds.

But whatever the people's traditional attitude to economic disparities, the unemployment caused by the machine was bound to cause disturbances, and if Britain and other countries of mass production machinery succeeded in reducing the chances of such disturbances to the minimum, it



was because they were conquering new lands in distant countries as their mass scale production was increasing. And a time came when the man power—all that was available in the country—was fully utilised, and even called for, with increasing exports, better labour-saving devices.

The industrial countries of the west now turned, with the machine, a new leaf in their economic life; it was a sword which was put on the throat of the manual worker in the subjugated countries. The effect was the same as was first experienced by the workers of England and other imperial countries. The empires built in the wake of the industrial revolution were much different from the earlier ones. Formerly the imperial rulers were an extra burden—in addition to that imposed by local aristocracy—on the peasant and manual worker; now, while the extra burden remained intact, the peasant was placed in an economy in which he would have to sell his produce at cheaper prices and the worker would be deprived of the work he had been engaged in for thousands of years. The mass production factories of the imperial countries needed an abundant supply of raw materials to turn them into finished goods, and as the factory owners had an effective voice in the governments and parliaments of their countries, they caused such economic policies to be adopted, in their own countries and in the countries under their imperial rule, as would get them raw materials at cheap prices, and as would get them good prices for the manufactured goods. In the new imperial dispensation, a blood-sucking method was devised.

This is how it was enforced. The machine-made articles were bound to be cheaper, as they were produced at a mass scale, than those produced by individual labour. If the importing country were politically free, it would have, in order to protect the livelihood of its people, imposed restrictions on imports and foreign trade; but the importing countries were subject countries, and their imperial rulers favoured their own nationals against those of the dependencies. The biggest disturber of economy of the subject countries was cloth, of which huge stocks were every year dumped in the markets of these countries. Millions of men and women, who had from times immemorial been engaged in spinning and weaving, became idle. Many of them turned to the already crowded profession of agriculture, increasing the pressure on land; some became beggars, and some took to a life of crime. Thus, as the imperial countries were making industrial progress, the subject countries were getting



poorer. The people's purchasing power was falling, and with it were falling the prices of the land produce. The other factor aiding the rise of this phenomenon was the imperial government's revenue policy. Land revenues were raised or maintained at the usual high level, and the collecting staff's illegal gains were connived at, with the result that the peasant was compelled to dispose of a substantial portion of his produce. This was an ideal condition for foreign exploiters. They bought foodgrains (at prices lowered by their own policy) for the people of their own countries and cotton for their big factories.

The workers of the imperial country were now part of an exploiting machinery; their economic condition was better than what it had been before the machine age. They grew conscious of the fact that factory owners were making huge profits from foreign trade and also of the fact that unemployment had nearly ceased to exist. And they had developed a system of trade unions. Therefore they often fought with success for higher wages and better conditions of work. Gradually, the poor—ill-paid and ill-treated—workers of the imperial country became well-fed and well-treated citizens, taking pride in their personal liberty and in the democratic system of their government. They were happy, and hardly ever thought that the prosperity they enjoyed had come from a system which had thrown millions in other countries out of employment and reduced many to the plight of starvation. But compared to their masters, they were still very poor. The masters who first exploited them were now exploiting millions of men of other countries.

The people of Europe had passed through centuries of oppression, first under the omnipotent supremacy of the church and then under the kings of divine rights. Their minds were in chains. Science was regarded as a challenge to the ways of God, and those known to be applying their minds to scientific discoveries were threatened with punishment. Those whose creative faculty broke the chains of restraint and who wrote out their theories and conclusions secretly, smuggled their manuscripts to secret printing shops; the books were clandestinely published without the authors' names on the title covers. For hundreds of years men of science were prevented from giving the world their discoveries. When Liberty arrived and men's minds were set free, the same countries, particularly the imperial countries of Britain, France and Germany, which would not allow science to dabble in the world's affairs which



were the concern of God, used that liberty to oppress and suppress other people, to deprive them of their freedom. They would not allow their subject countries liberty to make use of scientific discoveries in a way that was likely to militate against the interests of the imperial masters.

Of the empires acquired in the early years of the machine age, the British Empire was the largest, and of the countries subjugated, India was the biggest country. It would therefore be apt to illustrate the point being discussed here by brief quotations from the old accounts relating to that empire and that subject country. The Directors of the East India Company, which acquired and owned the empire, themselves said: 'The vast fortunes acquired in the inland trade have been obtained by a scene of the most tyrannic and oppressive conduct, that was known in any age or country.' In 1858, Sir George Cornewall Lewis said in Parliament: 'I do most confidently maintain that no civilised Government ever existed on the face of this earth which was more corrupt, more perfidious and more rapacious than the Government of the East India Company from 1765 to 1784.' The Indian leader, Dadabhai Naoroji, presented the following figures for the period 1849-50 to 1894-95: 'British India sent out or exported of her produce to the extent of £526,740,000 for which she has not received a single farthing's worth of any kind of material return. Besides this loss of actual produce, there is the further drain of the profits on an export of £2,851,000,000, which, taken at only 10 per cent, will be another £285,000,000.' According to Naoroji, India was sending every year to the land of her rulers goods worth Rs. 400 million, in return for which, she got nothing at all. As far back as 1835, the then Governor-General of India had himself admitted: 'The misery hardly finds a parallel in the history of commerce. The bones of the cottonweavers are bleaching the plains of India.' Decade after decade the condition of the people grew worse. How the European exports affected other workers may be illustrated by two quotations. The Census Report of 1911 said: 'The decrease in the number of metal workers and the concomitant increase in the number of metal dealers is due largely to the substitution for the indigenous brass and copper utensils of enamelled ware and aluminium articles imported from Europe.' *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1907 (Vol. III), noted: 'The native iron-smelting industry has been practically stamped out by cheap imported iron and steel within range of the railways, but it



still persists in the more remote parts of the peninsula.'

The product of science and technology was in the course of time taken to India also as to other subject countries, and factories were established with British or Indian capital. The British were of course the greater gainer again, but what is more relevant to the present study is the miserable fact that while in England the substitution of the machine for manual workers did not ultimately leave the distressing effect of unemployment, in India, which was still an importing country and was not in a position to build an export market, the unemployment swelled to dangerous proportions. In 1946, on the eve of British withdrawal from India, the total number of factory workers in the country was not more than two per cent of the working population. Indian industrialists were beginning to enjoy the same pattern of *laissez faire* as British factory owners had claimed and were enjoying, but while the latter filled up the vacuum of unemployment with the opportunities provided by their empire, the former had no excuse to deceive their conscience. India, like similarly-situated other countries, therefore remained confronted with the phenomenon of the expanding factory economy and consequently mounting unemployment. The cottage industries of spinning, weaving, sugar, oil, leather, and many others were mechanised, all reducing the use of manpower. India exported large quantities of skins and hides as raw materials for British factories, and between 80 and 90 per cent of the people of a country which produced so much raw material could not afford to buy a pair of ordinary footwear.

Those of the working population who were utilised in the mechanised industries and escaped the misery of unemployment were, like their brethren in the west in the early years of the machine age, detached from their rural life of freedom and healthy climate. They lived now in dark, damp dungeons, often half a dozen people sharing a cell of 80 square feet. After the day's hard work, they would go, before the cell virtually swallowed them at night, to a liquor shop which provided the only entertainment to their dull life. They drank and drank until they got drunk. Some squandered all their wages, and the families, which had sent them to the town to earn, starved or went half-fed. The wife protested, and the husband belaboured her. As a British civilian in India, Frederick John Shore, said in his *Notes on Indian Affairs*, 'drunkenness and the use of intoxicating drugs increased to an extraordinary degree under English rule.' Drink manufacturing and



selling was a Government monopoly, and the Government encouraged the consumption of liquor.

The slave labour and then the indentured labour were another form of exploitation by the machine-owning empire-holder. A slave was a private property of his master, and was obliged to do what his master ordered him to do. There was not to reason why. But the expansion of machinery coincided with the universal demand by some humanitarians that slavery should be abolished; and it was abolished by the different empire-owning countries of Europe in the mid decades of the nineteenth century. But even when slavery was legal, British exploiters had resorted to a more convenient and more profitable method. They recruited labour in one colonial country, binding it by indenture to be in the employ of its employer for a certain number of years, and sent it to another colony where, on account of the abundance of raw materials, the machine promised large profits. At the time of the recruitment, the men were given an attractive picture of comfortable living and bright prospects, but when they were actually at the job, they discovered that they had been thrown into hell. The indentured labourers' plight was worse than that of slaves; the slave was a property, and his health was of concern to the master, but in the case of the indentured labourer the employer could afford to be indifferent, and he was actually indifferent.

In the United States, the slave remained for a long time as a component part of some of the mechanised profit-making activities. The employers first tried to use Indians as labourers in the fields and in the mines, but when the hard life, different from that they passed in the open and different from that of easy work, killed them, Negroes were brought from Africa. The Negroes too, though stronger than Indians to stand rough treatment and exacting work, collapsed, and began to die like Indians. Slavery had been introduced into the continent of America by the Spaniards, but had become an inevitable part of the white man's economy, and though it was abolished in the imperial countries of Europe, it was maintained in America. Liberty, which had been paraded more vociferously in the United States than in any other country, was made ridiculous here; the Declaration of Independence, which laid down the principle that 'all men are created equal', made an exception in the case of those whose skin was dark and who worked on the plantations of the southern states. In the North, slavery had of course, been abolished, but the south persisted in



retaining it. In 1860, the States had a great man, Abraham Lincoln, as its president, whose determination to end slavery was not deterred even by a civil war between the north and the south; ultimately he won, and in 1863, by his 'Emancipation Proclamation' set all slaves free. In 1865, the president was murdered, but he raised his country to a rank which other countries of whitemen had already achieved.

There was, however, little in this rank to be proud of. About the time the civil war was going on in the United States for the emancipation of the slave, the countries which had years ago abolished slavery were witnessing a worse treatment meted out to 'free citizens'. In January 1860, a country magistrate Broughton Charlton, said at a meeting in Nottingham, 'that there was an amount of privation and suffering among that portion of the population connected with the lace trade, unknown in other parts of the kingdom, indeed, in the civilised world... Children of nine or ten years are dragged from their squalid beds at two, three, or four o'clock in the morning and compelled to work for a bare subsistence until ten, eleven, or twelve at night, their limbs wearing away, their frames dwindling, their faces whitening and their humanity absolutely sinking into a stone-like torpor, utterly horrible to contemplate... The system is one of unmitigated slavery, socially, physically, morally, and spiritually.' Almost in every factory, in every business establishment, where labour was engaged at a mass scale, men, women and children were subjected to strenuous work of 12 to 16 hours, some time longer, and the result was physical break-down, frequent illness, early deaths. The years of their working capacity were devoted to increasing the wealth of their masters. It was after many years of struggle that workers of the greatest imperial country got a better deal and were in a position to become an object of envy to the miserable employed and the starving unemployed of the subject countries.

The machine age made the problem of economic disparity and of exploitation of many by the few more vivid, more conspicuous than it had ever been before. In the past, it had been referred to in the context of religion, God's natural law; now that the temporal authority had been separated from religion and worldly affairs were looked at from a different angle, the staggering exploitation was treated by several thinkers as a problem created by man, and man should himself find a solution without involving



God in it. They had before them Locke's 'labour theory' of value, but labour, to Locke, was an individual affair: the product of a man's labour must belong to him; and only that much must belong to him. The mass production factory had made a change in which the individual claim virtually disappeared. As Thomas Hodgekins stated in 1825: "There is no longer anything which we can call the natural reward of individual labour. Each labourer produces only some part of a whole and each part, having no value or utility in itself, there is nothing on which the labourer can seize and say: "It is my product, this I will keep to myself." In a factory, many men co-operated together to produce a whole thing; some produced some parts of it, and others others. The change had changed Locke's individual into a corporate body; but the principle underlying his theory was not affected by the change: as an individual was entitled to the fruit of his labour, so should be the many engaged in production in a co-operative way.

Altruism, which always manifests itself, though differently according to circumstances, now manifested itself with greater urge because there was in the circumstances greater misery, more human tears. This altruism flowed into two directions. In the one current were those who belonged to the constitutional variety. Their minds were circumscribed by the English, American and French revolutions in which the security of property figured in the lists of natural rights; their concept of liberty included the liberty to make property, whatever the means. They saw nothing wrong in the machine being made a means of acquiring wealth; to their altruistic approach, all that appeared wrong was the bad treatment accorded by employers to their employees. Therefore, they agitated for better treatment; particularly, they asked the working hours of employees to be reduced. Labour, according to them, could fight for a better deal, but could not question the profits of the employers. Security of property had been provided for in the constitutions of different countries, and either they regarded this provision sacrosanct, or would not ignore it because if they ignored it, they would be rightly interpreted as attacking the constitution. They would like to be practical men.

In the other current were men who urged that reason should be given a free flow and not stemmed by the limitations of constitutional provisions and by the prevalent interpretation of liberty. They argued that a liberty which



deprived workers of a considerable portion of the fruit of their labour and allowed it to go into the pocket of a single individual or a group of individuals constituting the factory ownership was actually the negation of liberty; it was perversion of reason. History, not very remote, told them how the capital, which now formed the wherewithal of exploitation of others' labour, came. That history, briefly stated, is this. After the disappearance of serfdom in the last quarter of the 14th century, a great majority of the population of England consisted of free peasant proprietors. Macaulay, in his *History of England*, says: 'The petty proprietors who cultivated their own fields with their own hands, and enjoyed a modest competence. . . then formed a much more important part of the nation than at present. If we may trust the best statistical writers of that age, not less than 160,000 proprietors who, with their families, must have made up more than a seventh of the whole population, derived their subsistence from little freehold estates. The average income of these small landlords. . . was estimated at between £60 and £70 a year. It was computed that the number of persons who tilled their own land was greater than the number of those who farmed the land of others.' Then, in the wake of a succession of political turmoils, bulk of land was concentrated in the hands of the feudal lords. The land greed of these lords was lavishly fed by the collapsing supremacy of the church; 'the estates of the church were to a large extent given away to royal favourites, or sold at a nominal price to speculating farmers and citizens, who drove out, *en masse*, the hereditary sub-tenants and threw their holdings into one.' The process continued, and by the middle of the 18th century, the yeomanry virtually disappeared. A British writer said in 1773: 'I most lament the loss of our yeomanry, that set of men who really kept up the independence of this nation; and sorry I am to see their lands now in the hands of monopolising lords, tenanted out to small farmers, who hold their leases on such conditions as to be little better than vassals ready to attend a summons on every mischievous occasion.'

Landed aristocracy existed in England even before, but this revolution of usurpation, created a favourable situation for the industrial revolution to flourish. Under the new agrarian system, the wages of farm labourers and the income of peasants fell considerably; their subsistence became difficult, and many men, women and children made themselves available for the exacting work in factories. Not



only the manpower, but even the money power in the possession of factory owners came from the same source—it was the product of the convenient marriage between the full-blooded feudal economy and the profit-making trade. Thus the money that constituted the capital of the factories had been accumulated not by savings, not by honest work, but by usurpation, by profiteering. Thus the labour, willing to be subjected to inhuman exaction and all manner of excesses that shortened their life span, came from a situation into which they had been thrown by force. And thus, the liberty, which was paraded with torch lights after the collapse of the supremacy of the church, was used to liquidate the peasantry and concentrate the land in the hands of a few proprietors. The economic condition was more or less similar in other industrial countries of Europe.

Therefore, men of the other current, who were called socialists, declined to assume that the production paraphernalia happening to be in the possession of the factory owners, really belonged to them. It should belong, they contended, to all those who came together co-operatively to work the factories; and if the argument be stretched further, it should belong, so that justice might be done though belatedly, to all those whose exploitation in the past rose gradually to be the factory investment. One of these men more noteworthy than others, was Robert Owen, himself a factory owner. Owen advocated a system whereby each co-operator in the production could participate in the profits of his work according to a scheme approved by all. Owen and other socialists regarded the whole system of production on the basis of arbitrary wages as an infringement on the rights of the workers.

The idea received an elaborate systematic and scientific treatment at the hands of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Marx is better known because of his definite superiority. Like others, who had during a period of more than two thousand years, devoted thinking to the phenomenon of nature and the behaviour of men in it, Marx discusses the evolutionary process through which man has passed. Throughout this process man makes progress with the application of his mind and his physical effort. 'Primarily,' Marx says, 'labour is a process going on between man and nature, a process in which man, through his own activity, initiates, regulates, and controls the material reactions between himself and nature. He con-



fronts nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, in order to appropriate nature's productions in a form suitable to his own wants.' Labour, to Marx, was the sole basis of economic life and consequently of the entire structure of society; therefore man was first an economic animal and then a social animal 'if not a political'. As man's wants increased, there was division of labour, and, says Marx, 'the seeming independence of the individuals is supplemented by a system of general and mutual dependence through and by means of the products.' Thus with increased wants and division of labour, people became dependent on one another: Together they constituted society. Whether men worked with primitive tools or with modern machinery, labour was the basis of society. Therefore Marx asked, how was it that the worker, the instrument of society, had been thrown to the lower rung of the economic ladder, while men who did not mix their energies with the forces of nature occupied an advantageous position, gaining the best part of the result of the worker's labour? Since labour alone had power to create value, its result should wholly benefit the man who put in the labour. Money, without, labour, could not create more money; what it did in the existing state of economy was to employ labour and appropriate to itself the result of that labour, paying it a meagre amount. The amount appropriated by the capitalist (money) is called 'surplus value' by Marx; it is over and above the amount of labour returned in the shape of wages. Marx suggests that the just economic order will be that in which the appropriator of the surplus value is eliminated, and workers get full enjoyment of their labour. Who would 'expropriate' the 'expropriators'? The answer Marx gave was, workers themselves, by a class struggle; the organisation of workers for a struggle was inherent in 'the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself': 'The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by their revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet, the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.'

How would the labourers, if the consciousness of 'surplus value' was aroused in them, bring about the fall of



the 'bourgeoisie'? They had two courses open to them: a violent revolution to depose the political authority, which sustained the economy of 'surplus value', or a democratic method based on adult franchise with sovereignty residing in the people. In Britain, whose industrial life in the nineteenth century was the background of Marx's economic philosophy, democracy was still struggling to attain manhood when he produced his thesis. The Reform Bill of 1832 only extended the privilege of the franchise in towns to house occupants who paid a rental of £10, and in counties to those who paid a rental of £40. It enfranchised the upper middle class, but the labourers and the poor middle class had no votes. It made only one individual in about forty a voter. When the Bill was presented before the King, he refused to consider the ballot; the aristocracy also obstinately refused to depart from the open system of voting in order to safeguard the 'legitimate interests' of property, and to exclude from the House of Commons men 'who would be following impulses not congenial to our institutions.' So, the British Parliament remained a farce. 'The aristocratic system of nomination,' to quote a British historian, 'which had been practised by the eighteenth-century owner of a rotten borough, was succeeded by the no less aristocratic system of intoxication. The Parliament of 1841 was known as the bribery parliament. Between 1832 and 1854 the 200 electors of St. Albans absorbed in one way and another over £24,000. As late as 1867 it was still common for every voter polling to cost £1 a head.' As late as 1867—Marx had already propounded his theories—the House of Commons did not have a single representative of any class except the possessing and employing classes. The British Government was the government of an oligarchy. What was the monetary and hence political potentiality of these possessing and employing classes? The landed aristocracy, about 2,250 persons, held nearly 15 million acres out of 33 million of the enclosed land; and 400 peers and peeresses held nearly six million. It was felt 'of great importance to the country and highly conducive to the working of the constitution that young men in high aristocratical positions should take part in the administration of public affairs and should not leave the working of our political machine to classes whose pursuits and interests are of a different kind.'

The Reform Bill of 1867 further liberalised the franchise in the boroughs, making all householders voters and also all lodgers who had occupied for a year unfurnished lodg-



ing of the value of ten pounds. In the counties, it added to the existing £50 rental qualification a new occupational franchise for tenants of property rated at £12, and it reduced the freehold qualification to £5. Nevertheless these provisions retained the indirect influence the large land-owners had been enjoying. The new reform brought about no improvement in the election ethics. About the election of 1868, John Bright said: '... the corruption, bribery, compulsion, tumult of this General Election have probably never been exceeded—the whole country is disgraced and ought to be shocked, and no man who has no other remedy to offer can with any show of reason resist the ballot.' The Ballot Act also came in 1872; and by another law enacted in 1883, the indirect power of the aristocratic class was to some extent controlled. By 1918, democracy in Britain made further progress, and the franchise was extended to all male adults and to women of at least 30 years of age.

More than half a century had rolled by since Marx had stated that the 'revolutionary class of the proletariat' would assert itself and bring about the fall of the 'bourgeoisie', but the working class of Britain was nowhere near the 'victory'; nay, it was not at all anywhere near the kind of 'revolution' Marx visualised. The Labour Party, which adopted the conversion of certain categories of productive private property into state ownership, was seldom voted to power; and even when it had opportunities to run 'His Majesty's government', it made an insignificant attempt. Another fifty years rolled by, and the proletariat did not make an inch of progress. Whatever progress it made was of the variety contemplated by those in the first current of altruism. The Labour Party is today looked upon as an alternative to the Conservative Party, and not as one which can, by any stretch of imagination, be regarded as aiming at an economic order from which the 'surplus value' would be eliminated. As Locke's philosophy had greater intellectual repercussions in other countries like France and America than in Britain, Marx's philosophy influenced men in a distant country, Russia, where conditions were different from those in Britain.

The failure of democracy to produce economic justice is a serious question for inquiry. Since the coming of democracy, the world has been witnessing the interesting phenomenon of money swallowing men, and thereby largely neutralising democracy. This phenomenon had been in existence already, and if it deserves to be taken particular notice of in the present age, it is because democracy



was expected to reverse the order. Before we discuss how money exercises its domination over democracy, let us have in the historical perspective an idea of its power.



## Chapter XII

### CRIME—LEGAL AND ILLEGAL

Like other creatures, man, when he wandered for food, knew that it could not be obtained without effort. Even the plucking of fruits from a tree involved some physical effort. But like other creatures, man had the natural tendency to exert the minimum possible effort. One way—the easiest way—to avoid exertion as far as possible was to snatch the produce of others' exertion. In this behaviour also there was similarity between men and animals: some men would take to this way, while others would not. The former were few and the latter many. Human society was thus divided into two classes: those who earned their food by their own physical effort, and those who endeavoured to live, and often succeeded in living, on others' efforts. This division, broadly speaking, has since then persisted. It constitutes the greatest problem human race has always been confronted with: a small minority is a problem to a big majority. The entire human history, according to the current definition, is a history of the deeds and misdeeds of the minority; it is a history of the minority holding the majority to ransom.

The marauding activities of the minority have been changing with changes in the economic life of society. In the primitive age, the marauders carried on their activities as individuals, because they had to prey upon individuals. When the working individuals settled down as a community, and constituted themselves into a kind of state, the marauders were divided into several classes. Some continued their activities individually; they were called thieves according to the laws of the state. Some organised themselves into gangs, and committed robberies with a bold challenge; they were called robbers and the law provided heavier punishment for them. From the activities of these marauders arose the thought for the earliest laws and the organisation of a governmental machinery. Then came a challenge to this organisation itself—it came from the marauders of course. The ruling men of one state attacked another state with a mightier force than the victim possessed. They were the most disciplined and organised class of marauders; they possessed the resources of an entire state,



and unlike the other two classes, the law could not chase them after their success. The thieves and robbers would bolt away with the booty, but the invaders would stay to enjoy themselves with the great booty they had seized. The thieves and robbers were condemned as criminals and called unsociable elements, but the invaders, when victorious, were hailed as brave people and they occupied the highest place in the social life. Thus thieving by individuals and robbery by gangs was a crime, and the seizure of a whole territory by a disciplined army was bravery, and bravery was a virtue.

This criterion of crime and virtue took many years to become an unquestionable assumption. For a long time, in fact until a few centuries ago, hordes moved from one place to another in quest of better means of living, and forcibly displaced the old inhabitants. In the recent centuries, the most conspicuous men of this variety are the European settlers in America, Africa, Asia, and Australia. Man's quest for food is as old as his existence on this earth, and the quest includes his movement from one place to another. First he covered the distances on foot, then on the back of an animal, and then more conveniently as better means of conveyance became available to him. The distances he traversed depended from time to time on the kind of conveyance available to him. First the distances were tens of miles, then hundreds and thousands of miles: man's mind helping him to give himself boats and ships, he crossed big rivers and oceans to satisfy his urge for better means of living. These movements, with which history is replete, are justified as man's natural behaviour. All food resources provided by nature belonged to all creatures of the world, and men, like birds and animals, were free to go anywhere for the satisfaction of their needs. But seldom did all people of one place move to another; therefore those who did were called adventurous and the others were dubbed as contented with the little their surroundings gave them. So far so good. But when these adventurous men reached the new place, the terminus of their march, they seized the fields and other things on which men of that place had spent their labour. The system of their communal living, which had declared thieving and robbing a crime, was rendered void.

Such movements were the antecedents of later invasions of one state by another: they were forerunners of the colossal crime that was hailed as bravery. They exposed the postulates of the law: the law punished the crime as



long as the crime was an internal affair of the state; there was no universal law—it could not be without a universal authority to enforce it—to punish the crime committed by one state against another. This helplessness of the law and its punitive provisions has been the experience of the human race since the law was first conceived by man. The law, as it was originally conceived and as it operates even today, had a limited scope of application; it declared acts like thieving and robbing criminal, because those acts deprived the victims of their possessions. The principle on which the provisions of the law were based was that a member of the community had the right to possess and enjoy the fruits of his labour, and whoever tampered with that possession and its enjoyment committed a crime and made himself liable to punishment. This basis, incomplete as it was, was very primitive in conception; it belonged to the earliest period of primitive life when some people (whom we have called minority here), who were so much leisure-loving that they would not give their limbs even the exertion of going round and picking up food from natural resources, robbed others. To those primitive men, who gathered their food with their own efforts, the robbing appeared as an extraordinary behaviour; it continued, and when they became a settled community, they decided to deal with it by a system of punishment. But between the time when men experienced this extraordinary behaviour and the time when they were a settled community, which was a long period of evolution, many changes had taken place. These included a change—manifesting itself in different forms—in the way of the deprivation of working men of the fruits of their labour, partly or wholly. This way was an indirect way, not direct like thieving and robbing. Some of the forms of the indirect way were: disproportionate appropriation of natural resources (such as land, trees, etc.), abuse of the barter system by devices that disturbed parity in the exchange of labour; middlemanship which without any physical exertion grew richer than actual workers; the ruling establishment whose constituents took away a substantial part of the workers' produce; manufacture of articles of extra comfort for those appropriating by different devices a substantial part of the workers' produce; other parasitical activities, such as those of exporters, importers, stockists, speculators, money-lenders, etc. But the law remained primitive in its scope, and did not extend to the new indirect ways. Why? Because in the gradual evolution from the wandering life to com-



munity life and from the primitive community life to the formation of the state, men of the indirect way managed to appropriate the ruling power. There have been cases in history of robbers of the primitive variety gathering a force of accomplices, to which they went on adding as they went ahead successfully with their activities and winning kingdoms. When, they became kings, they administered the traditional law and punished thieves and robbers; they observed the tradition—of which they themselves were part—of the indirect way, and punished those who sought to disturb or disturbed that way.

A law, in the first place, has always been treated by mass of the people as the king's or the ruler's command; the assumption that to question a law is to question the ruler's authority has been firmly fixed in man's mind. So the postulates of the law which were determined in primitive society and upheld by men of the indirect way, consciously or unconsciously, became permanent postulates. Every child, when he develops the sense to understand worldly things, imbibes, almost instinctively, the habit of the fear of law; like others around him, he does not question it. To him only thieving and robbing (of the primitive variety) are crimes; any device that fits in with the indirect way is an honest way of living. In this way, he can go to any length and make himself as rich as he can. He does not realise that every addition to his riches means so much reduction in the share of the actual producers of wealth. He starts his life as a law-abiding honest man; he does not steal and does not use force to make money. He is a typical case of self-illusion. He is committing a crime against society, and yet he sincerely regards himself an honest man. The economic tradition of society has given him a diseased mind, and he cannot appreciate inequitable economic organisation in which he is an appropriator of others' labour. If he be accused of dishonesty, he would feel deeply hurt, because he has been behaving in his business according to certain recognized scruples. Between himself and the ruler there are numerous people who are earning money in the same indirect way; and his scruples entitle him to claim greater honesty than many of his class can claim. If he is confronted with arguments that transcend the existing postulates of the law, he would defend himself and the law with arguments that bear the stamp of approval of the tradition of thousands of years. The substance of these arguments is that he is born with a good fate, while workers, the actual producers



of wealth, are all men of ill fate.

The effect of these postulates of law on workers themselves, as far as their mental attitude is concerned, is not different. A child of a worker imbibes the same fear of law. When he develops the sense to understand the world around him, he finds himself in the midst of serious economic disparities, and takes them as the natural phenomenon of human society. He is engaged in his father's profession or takes up any other work. He sells his product to the middleman knowing that the middleman will make profit; he is part of a system in which the middleman cannot be ignored. He knows that the middleman's only job is to take the product from him and sell it to the consumer. He also knows that in this way, the middleman earns much more than he does. But he is never surprised; he never questions the system which allows a part of his labour to be appropriated by a lazy man. So overbearing is this system that his faculty of reason becomes dormant as soon as he reaches an age when it should begin to function. To him, as to the middleman, the system is perfectly honest. In the transaction between him and the middleman, there is a tacit understanding about the rates paid to him; and he complains of underpayment only when he finds that the usual rates paid to other workers by other middlemen are higher. The harshest word in his vocabulary for a departure from the tacit understanding is 'dishonesty'; often he dismisses this departure with mild grumbling. He is a legal animal, an unconscious victim of the law which recognises the sharing of his wealth by so many lazy people. To him a middleman, a money-lender, the ruling establishment, and other parasites are all legal sharers. He may be ruined by a money-lender collecting compound interest from him at an exorbitant rate and seizing his tools in lieu of the principal and the interest, but is convinced of the legality of the ruinous act. He lives with resignation and contentment in a world as evolved by the minority of the indirect way of crime.

Both he and his parasite are victims of an economic order which existed when they arrived in this world; they are like parts fitted into a machine—machine parts have no understanding and discharge the function allotted to them automatically. Like the machine, they cannot question why are they there. This machinery of the existing economic order is more challenging to human ingenuity than a manufacturing machine. From simple tools man's ingenuity took him to the complicated monstrous machinery



of the present age; with ever keener application of mind, he went on making improvements. But the machinery of the economic order—economic chaos in fact—resisted all thoughts produced by similar application of mind. Society gladly threw away the primitive tools when it was given an automatic machine; man's rational faculty at once accepted it. How is it that the same rational faculty failed to respond when thinkers said, some in religious language and some in secular language, that any device by which a man enabled himself to share the result of others' labour was an act of robbing? The motive power of the rational faculty is mind; mind has got to be exerted to understand what is rational and what is irrational. The amount of exertion required depends on the nature of the thing to be understood and appreciated. Men, generally speaking, are prone to applying their minds more readily and more keenly to things that are likely to promote their self-interest. Of this, society had had a powerful demonstration when substitutes for tools, in the form of great labour-saving devices, were presented. Spontaneously, the rational faculty of those who thought of making the machine a means of big profits accepted it, hailing it as a fine product of man's mind. The manual worker's rational faculty reacted wholly differently. In the background of his reaction also, there was self-interest. He reasoned thus to himself: the machine would replace many like himself, and should therefore be rejected by him. His reasoning travelled only as far as his self-interest allowed it. How could he ignore the effect of an economic system in which one man could appropriate most of the advantage flowing from the machine?

His reasoning would have been different if the economic order were different, if the profit went to one who actually mixed his labour with the machine. The machine was obviously an improvement on the primitive tools, and should have been universally welcomed in the same way as the tools were welcomed when they first appeared. But in the distance of time which divided the appearance of the tools and the appearance of the machine, appropriation of others' labour had become a vital part of the economic order, and the rational faculty was so thickly befogged that it could not judge things in their proper perspective. If the lazy profit-makers' rational faculty at once recognised the machine as an improvement, it was because they found it a profit-yielding instrument. Both, the lazy profit-makers and the actual workers, were victims of the exist-



ing economic order. The former would not stretch their rational faculty to thinking that something was wrong somewhere that prevented the worker's eye from seeing the obvious improvement. And the latter would not stretch their rational faculty to suggesting that if the tools belonged to them the machine should also belong to them, and that the economic order should be so rearranged as to make it possible; they struggled for a while against the machine, but did not think of launching a struggle against an order in which the instruments of production were, for the first time, going to become the property of those who did not mix their labour with them. The existing economic order being the overbearing phenomenon of life, both classes of people were its victims. The one accustomed to living on others' labour appropriated the machine as a new means of profit-making; and the other succumbed as he had always done in the past. The resistance that the workers put up in anger died down; the duration of anger is always short. Had it been produced by cold logic against the persistent wrong of the ages whose latest manifestation was the appropriation of the new invention by the profit-makers, it could not have been abandoned despite difficulties, because reason, and not anger, would then have been the motive force.

The present economic order substitutes helplessness for rational thinking, and surrender for resistance. It is a double-edged weapon; it undermines the rational faculty of the exploiter and the exploited both. It allows thieving and robbing to pass as honesty; it prevents profit-making thieves and robbers from changing to honest ways of living. On the excuse of the unnatural law allowing unlimited acquisition of property, it denies them the opportunity of redeeming themselves, an opportunity that is sometimes availed of by those who are thieves and robbers in the eyes of the law. There have been numerous cases of thieves and robbers correcting themselves and taking to honest ways of earning livelihood. But the legal thieves and robbers are, in the very nature of the economic order and the consequent social order, precluded from that redemption.

What is a mill owner, for example, to do it right reasoning convinces him of the wrong of which he has been a victim? He is a social animal, and society being divided into numerous classes according to economic status, he belongs to the class of his status. His relatives, friends all belong to that class. His membership of that class pre-



supposes a certain economic status; if he detaches himself from that status, he ceases to be an associate of his class. His wife, children, relatives, and others benefiting from him will all revolt against him. He will become a pitiable man, shorn of all respect and grandeur that came to him from his high economic status. Accustomed to extraordinary comforts, he will be degrading himself to the hard life of a worker. And then, he will be dubbed as a rebel against the law which gives sanctimonious recognition to property. He knows that he belongs to a class that has for thousands of years been living on others' labour; but he is helpless; he cannot detach himself from it. Like the legal thief, there came a moment in his life when consciousness of the wrong dawned upon him, and he thought he should redeem himself, but unlike the thief he failed; he remained a victim of the economic order.

Of different deceptive aspects of the property law, one is the freedom of opportunity: in this economic order, everybody enjoys freedom to create and avail of an opportunity to raise his economic status, that is, to rise from the status of a worker, in which the income is meagre and which is the lowest rung of the economic ladder, to that of a lazy profit-earner. The deception consists in the obvious impossibility of all workers getting opportunities to escape physical exertion and become lazy profit-makers. Yet the freedom of opportunities remains a current slogan because the few exceptional cases of workers rising to the status of their erstwhile exploiters by emulating their methods, prevent it being exposed as completely hollow. And how dangerously perverse is the little content of it? It degrades the dignity of labour and ennobles money-making without physical exertion. Its limited scope limits the scope of the evil, and few workers actually rise in the way it pretentiously advises them to rise.

In an economic order in which non-working men earn more than working men and in which the amount of possessions determines the amount of respectability, there is bound to be a competition in the practice of evil devices and cunning designs to make money. Men are born with different mental capacities that can be turned to good thinking as well as to bad thinking. According to the natural law, bad thinking is one that aims at appropriating others' labour; good thinking is one that restrains a man from doing so. But the prevalent law reverses the order, and every one who has inherited, or created an opportunity to gather, unearned money makes the best possible use of



the law with his mental capacity. If a superior mental capacity were to be used to devising methods by which economic justice could be promoted in society, it would escape the evil into which the tradition of the economic order throws it. But the right use of a superior mental capacity is impossible where the wrong use takes one to a position of higher respectability and the right use has a degrading effect.

Ever since currency replaced the barter system, the non-working class has been earning money with money and not by physical exertion. As long as the barter system lasted, commodities had their intrinsic value to a great extent, and every worker had his importance in society. There were, no doubt, certain disparities in that age also, but contrasts were few, and respectability, which now discriminates between the non-working rich minority and the working poor majority, did not exist. It is difficult to say how long currency remained a true measurement of workers' products; its character as the means of exchange remained genuine only as long as it was the representative measurement of labour, labour that produced something of common utility. It should not have taken long to suggest to men of devices that its buying capacity could be utilised even by those who did not work; the suggestion, in effect, was: if currency could be possessed somehow, one could avoid physical exertion; nay one could live more comfortably than the actual worker if one managed to possess more currency than he got for his product. As soon as money ceased to be the true substitute of the barter system, it began unfolding a devilish economic order; evil snatched the reins of order from virtue; evil-doers became respectable people and the workers a degraded crowd.

Money (currency), after it had lost its representative character, became disproportionate and unjust divider of commodities; those who came in possession of unearned money not only bought a disproportionate amount of commodities, but also had a surplus left with them. With the increase in their savings increased their capacity to multiply money with money. When the purpose of currency was frustrated and its abuse began, the natural law should have asserted itself; the producers for whose facility an easy method of exchange was introduced should have protested against the abuse, and should have declared, 'we return to the barter system'. But perhaps there was no protest, no murmur. The reason is understandable. The



frustration and abuse did not come suddenly; they took quite a few generations to grow, and they grew so slowly that the worker hardly realised that a devastating change was taking place in the economic life. The process of the rise of the non-working minority to positions of respectability and the degradation of the working majority to positions of humiliation was also slow. In this slow process both were getting accustomed to their respective positions: it was a slow process of psychological transformation. The climax came when the poor became as subservient to the rich as they had been to the men of the ruling establishment. Often they were more subservient to the rich, because on them, as owners of manufacturing establishments, depended their livelihood. The imposing possessions and personal appearance of the rich, and the austere living and poor look of the poor at once indicate who is superior and who is inferior. The rich have around them an air of superiority and the poor suffers from an inferiority complex.

Such, in brief, was the state of economic and social life when democracy arrived with its slogan of liberty and equality. And both the superior minority and the inferior majority were yoked to the chariot of democracy in which sat liberty and equality.



## Chapter XIII

### ECONOMIC MEASUREMENT OF LIBERTY

Men enjoyed the fullest liberty when they wandered gathering food. The entire earth belonged to them as it did to other creatures; there was no private interest in anything. When they mixed their labour with different pieces of land to raise crops, they appropriated those pieces quite rightly because as productive units these were the result of their labour. This initial step in the evolution of settled life was an encroachment on liberty: it shut out the rest of the humanity as also other creatures from the appropriated land. But as this kind of appropriation became the general rule, men agreed by tacit consent that so much curtailment of liberty was necessary and good. It was necessary and good because it facilitated acquisition of food. Man's preference for a small plot of land to the common ownership of the entire earth was an splendid example of his faculty of reasoning; he realised that in a restricted area, he could, by his physical exertion, get his food supply readily, assuredly and adequately. He saw in the curtailment of his liberty the best solution of the difficulties he had been experiencing in the wandering life.

The concept of liberty then changed, though the common ownership of the community in certain spheres of the wealth of nature, for example forests, still remained. All that a man now cherished was the liberty to enjoy undisturbed the fruit of his labour; he should not be deprived of his land and its produce. The tacit consent of his fellow beings for the enjoyment of this liberty was there all right, but the threat from lazy elements, living on others' labour, that disturbed him in the wandering life, still persisted. It was a problem to the entire community, and the solution proposed was a machinery of common protection. This machinery, which developed into an elaborate and complicated governmental machinery, required every producer to part with a part of his produce to feed it. It was realised that a price would have to be paid for liberty to be maintained. It was a heavy price—every producer giving away a part of every crop for the maintenance of liberty. The disturbers were a small minority, but as they were unknown



though often they lived in the midst of the community, they constituted a mysterious power, so mysterious that the big majority was perpetually afraid of them, and thought of an elaborate arrangement to catch and punish them. A permanent machinery was thought of because it was human nature to avoid exertion as far as possible, and there would always be some men who would endeavour to live on others' labour.

In mathematical measurement, liberty can, in the above context, be equated with the amount of one's possessions: one wants liberty to have full enjoyment of one's possessions. Any curtailment in possessions can be interpreted as curtailment of liberty. When men of a community thought of a protective machinery, they decided to part with part of their liberty—their produce—in order that they might retain the rest of it. But the disturbers' activities did not cease, and in effect, the producers had to part with another part of their produce—that taken away by thieves or robbers. Their account of the amount of produce they had to part with unambiguously proved that the governmental machinery eventually turned out to be another curtailing factor of their liberty: often the number of thieves in jail was as big as the number of policemen and jail staff. A producer had a chance to escape theft, but he had no chance to escape government tax.

Whether in the wandering life or in the settled life, liberty was an economic attribute, cherished by producers and not by thieves. Only by this criterion can its curtailment be studied: the criterion would call for a redefinition of thieves. Collecting contributions from the producers by the agents of the protective machinery was not an end in itself; it was the means to an end. The success or failure of the machinery would be judged by the end. The end expected was that the machinery would eliminate thieving so that the community might enjoy its produce (minus the contribution made to the machinery). This end never resulted from the means employed; (there were rare governments in the world that succeeded in liquidating thieving completely). But the machinery remained, with a difference in the sustaining power. When it came into being, its sustaining power was the trust reposed in it by the producers; when it failed to discharge its function, its sustaining power was the man power with which it was required to function. Misappropriating the man power, the man—king or ruler—controlling the machinery, made public servants his private servants. The misappropriation



was the effect and not the declared aim; therefore the machinery maintained its facade, and always used protection as the excuse to make customary collections. On the strength of the man power, the king assumed arbitrary authority, and the amount of contributions he collected became a matter of his sweet will. The protective machinery thus turned into an exploiting machinery; it was the conversion of the liberty-protector to liberty-curtailer.

This was one of the major events in the transformation of the concept of liberty; the ruling establishment constituted a class of men whose possessions came from the producers. This class gave incentive to many people to acquire possessions without physical exertion. And since, liberty was an economic attribute, they were also entitled to it. Liberty could not be denied to the non-working classes, because the devices with which they made their possessions were not questioned. If the devices were questioned, the non-working people would have been declared thieves, and dealt with as disturbers of liberty. With the non-working men becoming richer than the working men, liberty became a quantitative term; the rich did not always depend for the protection of their possessions on the protective machinery of government, and engaged their own protection staff. But poor man's liberty always stood in danger of being violated; unable to arrange for private protection, he had the threat of thieves always hanging over his head. When it is borne in mind that the producer was poor and the non-producer rich, the deteriorating value of liberty will become easily noticeable. If thieves are excluded from the consideration, liberty was complete when there was no protecting machinery; it suffered a cut when the machinery became an irresponsible tax-gathering agency; it suffered a further cut when non-working people acquired superiority over workers in the matter of worldly possessions. And a time came when liberty's relationship with labour became very distant if it was not wholly lost. It will be a mild exaggeration to say that the relationship was wholly lost, because the ruling establishment discriminated between the rich and the poor, and the poor felt they could not get any protection from it.

As the poor's helplessness grew and correspondingly the ruling establishment and the rich's consciousness to crush them with impunity, liberty began receding into forgotten history. The king's awe, his servants' fear, and the rich's exhibition of high status gradually took its place. There are bulky volumes of books and more can be written on



how savagely kings exercised their awe; how their servants destroyed, exploited and looted those placed under their protection; and how rich men made them animals of prey.

There was little liberty left in the true meaning of its original concept. But the illusion was kept up; the illusion was necessary for the king and all those who had acquired big properties without work. They were not afraid of their liberty—property—being disturbed by thieves and robbers because they had their effective machinery to protect it; but they were afraid of those who ranked with them and whose force of man power matched with theirs; that is, of an invasion by another king and his propertied nobility. Liberty now made a striking departure from its ancient concept and was raised from economic to political status. In reality, there was a shift in the value, and not a fundamental change. What was now sought to be protected was the king's property (including his recurring collections from the people) and that of other rich men. What usually happened after a war would prove this assertion. If the invader won, the defeated king lost his kingdom, and often rich people also suffered; but the poor, the actual workers, remained usually unaffected. Whoever the king, the little liberty left to them remained undiminished. But when there was a threat of invasion or an invasion actually came, the illusory form of liberty was paraded with drum-beating, and the people, particularly the workers, were exhorted to fight the invader and make whatever sacrifice they could to retain their liberty. This abstruse form of liberty was presented in an emotional vein; as a man's emotions reacted against the injurer of a stone statue which he regarded as a god, so was he aroused about liberty. He did not ask why a stone statue was treated as a god; and he did not question what was the content of liberty, what was he going to lose in a war between one king and another. The liberty of which his forefathers were conscious no more existed, but there was no awareness of it in his mind. The picture of liberty now given him was akin to the stone statue, and as a gullible, credulous man he adopted it as his goddess. The goddess exhorted him to fight and be killed; any number of men might be killed, but there would be no regret because they sacrificed themselves for a noble cause, the defence of the goddess of liberty.

A war between one political unit and another was a magnified form of an attack by one individual on another with the intention of seizing his belongings. The attack by



one individual on another was an attack over his liberty to enjoy the ownership of his belongings; and if the attacker was arrested he was punished. There was complete likeness of this attack to the invasion of one political unit by another as long as the original concept of liberty lasted—as long as the protective machinery wholly and genuinely represented the workers. Liberty till then was an abstract term; it was genuinely a corporate affair and could reasonably bear even the emotional epithet of goddess. But diminution in the genuineness of its quality and consequently of its quantity robbed it of its all-embracing character; and to a man of right vision, the invasion of one unit by another was an attack on the disfigured, diminished liberty. It was like an action between two exploiters—if 'thieves' is not an appropriate word—one trying to snatch the ill-gotten wealth and dishonest means of the recurring income of the other. Both exercised unquestioned authority over their respective people, and could give any slogans to step up their fighting power. In the event of an attack on an individual or a group of individuals bound together by common interest by another individual or group, the reaction to fight is spontaneous. Exhortations are invoked by leading men of the group when spontaneity is missing, and spontaneity is missing when the element of commonness of interest is missing. In wars of the days of diminished liberty, war leaders made frantic efforts to fill with exhortations the vacuum left by the lack of spontaneity; people's minds were loaded with emotions under whose weight reason was suppressed and hidden. Liberty that once was a deity of action was now a stone statue; then it was perceptible to the eye of reason, now it was an object of blind worship.

Liberty originally expressed the idea of commonness of purpose; and loyalty to the region of this commonness of purpose was only its synonym. In emotional exhortations, loyalty to the region was compared with loyalty to one's home, one's family. The deceptive exhortation became acceptable to the emotional mind, and any conduct that militated against the (emotionally) accepted canons of regional loyalty or liberty was declared by the rules as treachery, as a treason. It was declared a crime and was made severely punishable by the statute. What emotions might fail to achieve was thus sought to be achieved by the force of law. The best law-abiding citizens in the world have been those who live by dint of labour, not on others' labour; they not only abided by the law of liberty, but often



became its ardent supporters. There have been many cases of rich men going over to an invader in response to monetary temptations, but few of the poor doing so. And it was always the poor who fought and exposed themselves to the hazards of injury or death and also of ruining their family happiness.

But the invocation of the goddess of liberty, it can rightly be suggested, was merely a subsidiary point in the preparations to meet the invader. Success, no doubt, depended on the fighting force and the resources to keep the fighting going. Often the fighting chiefs treated fighting as a simple business proposition; they recruited soldiers just as they employed domestic servants, and the mercenary soldiers fought in the same way as the domestic servants defended their master by risking their own lives. The link of loyalty that attached the soldier or the servant to the master was provided by the money the master offered in return for the service rendered to him. In this proposition, the economic structure, bereft of the old concept of liberty, was mentally accepted as it was, and the illusory form of liberty was not exhibited. The invaded king and his noblemen defended their possessions in the same way as they did from internal criminals; they would have defended them in the same way if they were attacked by honest working men the cumulative part of whose labour constituted the possessions. The hypothesis of an attack by honest working men in a bid to undo the continuing crime of economic injustice would vividly demonstrate the notoriety of the abuse of liberty: the re-establishment of liberty, that is economic justice, should have preceded its invocation for defence. The force of this argument can be appreciated when it is realised that the target of the ambition that prompted the invasion was the cumulative part of the working men's labour which the king and his noblemen possessed and which would go on rising perpetually. It would be pointless to suggest that chances of invasions would remain even after economic justice, the soul of liberty, had been restored. Then the comparison of regional loyalty with family loyalty would be a true comparison: then the region would fight the invader as a single family; then the threat of invasion would affect everybody equally, and the working men would not feel that whoever the ruler they would remain the exploited class; then the lasting reason and not transitory emotion would assert itself against an attack on liberty. Reason is more powerful than emotion, and the effect of its action is more durable.



But reason was not given a chance to come up; that it would be given a chance was to hope against hope, as the non-working men of privileges would never agree to surrender their possessions. They made liberty an exponent of their privileges, and also an exponent of the working men's poverty. Its economic facade was an internal affair: its political content was to be used against an invader. And the invader circumvented this content, not by design but by the usual character of an invader's ambition: he asked his army not to destroy crops, not to loot the producers because they would, after conquest, be his tenants from whom would regularly flow money into his treasury. After the conquest was an accomplished fact and the invader replaced the old king, the change, to the producers, was like the change of a house proprietor to a tenant, and to the non-working rich, it meant shifting of loyalty from one chief to another. Both retained the kind of liberty they had—exponent of privileges for the rich and of poverty for the poor. The political content also remained; after the new ruler and his successors had ruled many years and become part and parcel of the region, they presented the same political content of liberty as the defeated king had done. Ultimately, whoever might hold the reins of government, economic injustice emerged victorious; this was inevitable, because the invasion did not seek to undo it but carried with it the tradition of maintaining it. The emotional political content of liberty was allowed to go into deep slumber after the invader's conquest; and liberty as an economic attribute (in its diminished form) remained wide awake. Since every ruler guaranteed protection of this liberty of economic injustice, its main beneficiaries, the rich, gave the new king as much loyalty as they gave to his predecessor.

Another side of liberty had been developing with the growth of human society: it was the liberty of faith and beliefs. Unlike the product of labour, it was not material; it was imaginary. In a helpless state of mind, men believed that rains, for example, were sent down by the rain god; later on they placed their faith in the stone statues of so many gods. The beliefs were, in fact, part of men's natural desire for material security. Whether they really provided material security was a reasonable question. But the beliefs proved stronger than the power of reason; they became a fact of life, while the reasonable question an imaginary thing. If anybody, carrying his reason to its logical conclusion, thought of destroying the stone statues,



he was dubbed as violator of personal beliefs, personal liberty. But if he converted the statue believers to his point by his power of reasoning, he would not be treated as a violator. Reason, therefore, could not be forced on anybody ; it could be used as a means for conversion. The convertible character of belief made this aspect of liberty a dubious commodity: on numerous occasions in history men were forced to abandon their old beliefs and adopted new ones dictated by the users of force, and when the layers of time obliterated the mark of force, the liberty of belief was claimed to retain them. Several religions owe a sizable part of their following to the use of force, and today such converts are as ardent claimants of liberty to belong to the faith forced on them as those who willingly accepted it. Reason, in this matter, is generally defeated by irrational beliefs. For example, those whose faith forbids or is interpreted as forbidding birth control, will assert their right to liberty against the rational approach to the population problem.

The irrational content of beliefs was bound to expose the foolishness of the liberty of belief to that extent, but could be exploited by fathers and interpreters of the beliefs. The beliefs, like those illustrated above, were not the result of a rational or scientific inquiry; they were given by men who created an impression of their mental superiority and spiritual power. Most men do not draw upon the fund of their own resources of mind, and habitually admit into their minds anything that comes from those supposed to be wise. In this behaviour there was inherent the hint to the so-called wise men that the masses' credulity could easily be exploited: even their zeal for the liberty of beliefs could be exploited. This is what the Church, for example, did in Europe. Before the Church assumed full-blooded authority, both spiritual and temporal, there was the liberty of belief in the Roman Empire. For a long time it exploited the convertible character of the liberty of belief, and kept up the facade of liberty alive. But when the Church's mystical interpretations of beliefs appeared to the people as money-making devices and when its force exceeded all records of the past, it made itself suspect in the eyes of many people. It rendered its character as the custodian of beliefs questionable, and gave rise to the feeling that the interpretations were motivated solely by selfishness. The feeling was intensified when those who entertained it were severely punished, some were even put to death. Islam too had used force, but this feeling did not arise in the areas



of its spiritual and temporal operation. In Europe, the death knell of the liberty of belief, which included the liberty of expression and conviction, had been rung; and men like Luther appeared to revive it. And since simultaneously with the movement for revival of the liberty of belief, there came up a movement for the separation of the temporal authority from the spiritual, it was asked whether a king's claim to divinity was consistent with his purely temporal position. These movements and questions arose in Europe out of the peculiar political and 'religious' conditions existing there.

The thinking mind did not seek something which never existed, but wanted something of which it had been deprived. As it proceeded, it brought to bear freshness on the old thing; it gave new meaning and new purpose to liberty, but did not contemplate a fundamental change in the content. The security of possessions as they stood was the economic aspect of its concept of liberty; it imparted greater rigidity and compactness to the political aspect by substituting nationalism for the vagueness of the empire. Nationalism connoted compactness of affinity of the people of a region, and sought to bind them loyally to that region, the nation, which was given a new definition, and therefore to the government as its representative. In a way, it was the old wine of emotion in the new bottle. But it would not treat it as an emotional affair; it must be treated as a sacred thing, as sacred as the other aspect, the right to enjoy property. Its next concern, born of the bitter experience of a dictatorial authority functioning as government, was that the government of the nation should be such as could be trusted with the authority to ensure enjoyment of liberty. Such a government, it suggested, could only be that which enjoyed the confidence of the people; mere promise by the ruler would not be an adequate guarantee; the people must elect the government and change it periodically so that it might not relapse into dictatorship.

But the concept of liberty having been vitiated with the vitiation in the concept of the means of acquiring possessions and reversion to the old concept of the means being considered impracticable without revolutionary changes in the economic structure, democracy started with a serious handicap. It was the same handicap that was glaringly conspicuous in the Greek city republics: (1) the real workers, then called slaves, had no vote; (2) the real producers of wealth could not demand an order of economic justice. In its new birth in Europe, democracy began func-



tioning as property of the big propertied class, and was denied to the real workers, who were not slaves, though only legally. Gradually all citizens were given the right of vote; it was an innocuous revolution because the concept of liberty as propagated recognised all prevalent means of acquiring property.

Yet liberty was never expatiated and expostulated so elaborately as it was done in this age of the evolution of democratic thought. The thought usually missed the fundamental factor that what was sought to be protected in the name of liberty was in fact the result of the vitiation of liberty, and what was sought to be suppressed and punished in the name of protection was inherent in the vitiated concept of liberty and would remain as long as that concept lasted. All men have the ambition to get more money in order to buy more commodities and also those that they do not possess and some others possess: there is no difference, as far as this ambition is concerned, between a thief and a legally honest man. A legally honest man has numerous avenues—he can create new ones also—that can, if he can utilise them, help him fulfil his ambition; a legal thief has only one. Why does the thief not choose one or more of those avenues and prefers thieving is a different question; we are concerned here with the object which is the same in every case of ambition, whether legal or illegal. A thief has the same object as, for example, a factory owner, who pays his servant less than the contracted wage: the additional amount that he gains by this misappropriation gives him the means, to that extent, to fulfil his ambition. If a similar amount is seized by a thief from that servant in a public street, the act, in the eye of the law, will be a crime, and punished according to the relevant provisions of the law. That law does not apply to the factory owner. He will be dealt with under a different law, and if the court is satisfied that he has violated the contract, he will be ordered to pay the servant the amount withheld with the cost of the litigation. The law did justice to the servant, but did not punish the factory owner. By its intervention, the law got the servant his due, but did not take into account the mental pain and inconvenience caused to him and the time he wasted. If a victim like this servant considered the botheration and inconvenience of legal intervention disproportionate to the amount he would get, he would prefer to forego it, and the master would be left with that much additional means for the satisfaction of his ambition. This illustration



arises out of the legal arrangement made to protect liberty: it is claimed that the law did not discriminate between the poor servant and the rich factory owner, and both were equal in its eye. Since it does not curb the ambition, that is, it does not suggest a way to deny objects of ambition, it cannot liquidate the temptations that appear as attacks on individual liberty: a factory owner, to repeat the example, will continue to be tempted to make extra gains at the expense of the worker, even as a thief would continue his criminal activity.

The rule of law is one of the most elaborated manifestations of modern liberty. To assess it properly, one must bear in mind that (1) law is not a new thought, and (2) the rule of law is not necessarily the rule of justice. Justice is what it is defined by law; its scope is determined by law. The point may be illustrated by the example of a middle man. A cloth seller, for example, settles down in a colony of labourers, and opens a shop because none existed there and the labourers had to traverse a long distance to get cloth. When they become his permanent customers and, losing contact with the town's cloth-seller, lose contact with the fluctuating prices, the colony's shopkeeper raises his margin of profit and at times sells some varieties at exorbitant prices. What should be the margin of profit is his own affair, and earning high profits is no breach of law. When he came to the colony, his financial condition was not much better than that of an average labourer; after a few years he became richer than all the labourers put together. His riches were the result of the device by which he collected a part of the labourers' hard-earned money; but since he did not snatch the money from them, the law would not interfere; if a thief did it, the law would certainly interfere. The law would protect the people from thieves, but not from men like the colony cloth-seller. There was the same concept of law and justice before the rule of law, as a child of modern liberty, was presented to people.

A law, it might be argued in this context, is not a permanent fixture; it can be changed, changed by the people's own representative in the legislature, in the manner they think best to protect the interests of the people. This plausible argument comes in direct clash with another aspect of liberty: to own any amount of property and earn any amount of money by the prevalent devices and by such new devices as correspond with the prevalent ones. When profits cannot be restricted generally, they cannot



be restricted in one particular branch of the economic structure; a restricted restraint will not disprove the rule and will only divert the profit-maker to another branch.

Let us magnify the example of the cloth-seller. A contractor is given by government a hundred million worth of public work to execute. The government agency concerned scrupulously observes the rules and gives out the contract to the lowest tenderer. The margin or profit accruing to the contractor will be quite high in proportion to the work, which, in its effect, will mean that so much of public money goes into the pocket of a single individual, who could not have got it by any exertion however skilled. The law's only concern in this transaction is to see to it that the contractor keeps the account of his profit and expenses correctly and pays the income tax according to the rules. The huge profit is not just a piece of gold whose glittering quality will satisfy his eyes, nor is it just a fat bank balance which satisfies the greed; it is the means of fulfilling ambitions in the shape of material possessions or sensual pleasures. The greater is one's means, the greater is the chance of one becoming the cause of affecting the economic life of many. A law, an aspect of liberty, that justifies this phenomenon, is substance to one and shadow to others. It is a vicious law; therefore its concept of justice is also vicious. It is a law with whose approval an individual makes by means of a telephonic message a hundred million, and thereby acquires the means to disturb the economic life of the whole community.

Laws issued by arbitrary rulers connoted coercive force; they were not made with the consent of the people and some of them were regarded as assailing the personal rights. The rule of law in a democratic set-up connotes laws framed by the representatives of the people. It is not necessary for all the representatives of the legislature to agree upon the provisions sought to be given the form of a law; a bare majority is usually enough. Democracy is the rule by majority. But whether the consenting vote comes from a bare majority or from the entire body of representatives, a law will have to be confined to the circumference of the fundamental right relating to property. It cannot transcend the border line. If it does, the Constitution will declare it null and void. Democracy, it can again be argued, does not prohibit changes in a constitution once framed, and if the people (majority) really want a law amending the right relating to property, they can do so by amending the constitution. There can be no better proof



of this provision of democracy being illusory than the broad fact that in no democratic country have people voted against the right about property; this fact confronts one with a baffling paradox; the working people themselves do not want their exploiters to be liquidated! (Why this seemingly simple thing does not happen in democracy is discussed in a subsequent chapter.)

The rule of law aspect of liberty seeks to protect people from the arbitrariness under absolutism, but does not protect them from the economic system inherent in the order which it sanctifies, because, essentially, democracy was thought of as an alternative to absolutism which had been harassing people indiscriminately, both rich and poor. Democracy was thought of as a weapon against kings and not against economic exploiters. This underlying expediency pervades the entire elaboration of modern liberty. It was enough for protagonists of democracy in England, for example, to protest when the government denied public employment to Dissenters, and to see to it that such a discrimination was revoked. Again, it would give them enough satisfaction that the administration of 'justice' was made so cheap that even the poorest could get protection of the law. To them, 'economic liberty' would be satisfactorily maintained if employers did not deprive their employees of their jobs causelessly, and if they paid them adequate wages. ('Adequate' is always a vague term.)

Freedom of expression is another profusely elaborated aspect of liberty. Men have been talking with one another ever since they provided themselves with language; and they have been talking, generally speaking, quite freely. Articulate speech has been the most vital adhesive power to keep men together in society. Men must talk with one another when they sit together even if they have nothing particular to talk about. When a particular thought, idea, news or exhortation is to be conveyed to others by men possessing it by word of mouth, they call those interested in receiving it together and address them. This was, and is till the way used by religious preachers. For example, a man, who imbibed the belief in one omnipotent God as against many gods and as against idol worship and desired the belief to spread, found it convenient and economical to his breath to hold public meetings instead of talking to individuals. There was public speaking of political variety also, differing in content from region to region and age to age. In city



republics, those entitled to participating in their affairs, expressed their views freely, but in the regions of autocratic rule, a self-imposed restraint, born of fear of the king, was observed. If an autocratic ruler was ardently partial to one religion, he would not allow expressions critical of it; numerous religious persecutions were the result of this partiality. In countries where democracy was adopted or granted, freedom of expression was assured.

This freedom is held aloft as democracy's great gift to people. A poor man is supposed to regard it a better possession than a piece of bread; an unemployed is expected to regard it as preferable to the offer of a job if he were required to make a choice between the two. The argument adduced in support of this supposition or expectation is that if the order of preference be reversed, the conditions of earning bread might become less honorable and more exacting. The argument might be illustrated by the difference between the treatment meted out to factory workers in England in the early periods of the factory age and that which was the result of protests made in exercise of the right of freedom of expression. This argument takes its strength from an event of history, which can be interpreted as denial of freedom to workers. The freedom they enjoyed when they worked with their simple tools and were not anybody's servants was more cherishable than the freedom of expression in the system which placed them under masters whose only relationship with them was that between the bee and rose petals. If the evolution were natural and workers were masters of the machine as they were of the tools, there would have been no need for the great gift of the freedom of expression. It is like creating a disease and then proudly prescribing a medicine; it is like hiding the cause of disease in order to glorify the medicine as a wonderful product of man's mind.

This freedom of expression is a curious term to the general mass of people. An insignificant minority of them actually uses the right, whatever its worth. An average worker, if told to express himself freely and fearlessly, would usually retort: 'I have nothing to say except that my wages are inadequate and often the treatment meted out to me is below the expectation.' His representatives in the union will do the expressing on his behalf, and it will be limited to his affairs as a factory worker. At a higher level, a political party professing to represent workers, will demand the ownership of certain big industries to be acquired by the state with compensation to be paid from public



money. This demand too does not ignore the assumption, enshrined as a fundamental right in the constitution, that property is sacrosanct, and cannot be acquired without compensation. They ignore the basic factor that the disturbing element in the economic order which they seek to change is the cumulative money; what material change is made by the substitution of money for the machine acquired? The two are the two sides of the same coin; the machine is itself money. To say in answer to the question that state ownership will deprive the owner of recurring profits which will in future become part of public exchequer is to ignore the basic fact again, which is that money will earn profit wherever it goes, and that it will not be kept idle. Whether it will earn more profit or less in its new adventure is a matter of chance and the investor's resourcefulness. An island of state-owned industries in the midst of the general economic order remaining unaffected cannot create an order of economic justice even in its limited sphere. Its working will be in accordance with the prevalent economic values, and it will eventually mean bureaucratisation rather than nationalisation. A diseased body cannot be cured by cutting a finger out of it.

One may take any aspect of economic life in a democratic set-up for illustration, and one will find that freedom of expression is a virtual prisoner of certain premises; it can function within the four walls of those premises. And even within the four walls, it is notoriously undermined. The Press is the biggest and the most powerful exponent of freedom of expression. The Press is, in effect, a living being, and therefore is wholly different from the printing press, a lifeless mass of machinery. Press was as big an improvement on pen as the locomotive was on the horse-cart. It put man in possession of a capacity to secure far greater circulation of his written word than the pen did; living in a democratic set-up, he could make use of this capacity in the exercise of his right of freedom of expression. And he did use it; anybody could get any number of copies printed of anything not violating the law. But press was after all a kind of machine, and could not belong to the poor. More improvements made it more costly, and when it grew into what is called the Press, from lifeless machinery into a powerful organ of expression, it posed a serious problem to the right of freedom of expression: could this right be enjoyed in the same measure by the poor as by the rich?

A modern newspaper establishment is a stupendous affair



and also a class affair. The investment it requires is beyond the means of the poor even if they pool their small resources through a co-operative society. This, however, is a controversial point, and it might be suggested that a co-operative venture is not impossible. From the assumption of the possibility arises a pertinent question: what kind of expression would a co-operative newspaper circulate? If it questions the existing economic order and puts out exhortations and views justifying theories about a classless society, it will be denied the patronage of the sources on which depends the existence of a newspaper. The newspaper industry is not like other industries producing consumer goods. Unlike their products, its product is sold at a lower price than the cost price; the difference and the profit (in excess of the difference) come from advertisements. Advertisements, in their turn, come from industries, that is, from the rich class. Thus newspapers depend for their existence on advertisements, which will be called a medium of publicity as long as their beneficiaries do not attack the advertisers' interests; but if any of the beneficiaries does, the advertisements will be regarded as patronage and will be withheld. An attack on the rich class will be rightly construed a part of class struggle, and the class will starve the struggle to death. There is no hypothesis in this statement; it tells the factual state of the Press.

The Press, generally, everywhere in democratic countries, is a representative of the vested classes, and has made the freedom of expression it misleadingly connotes a private possession and an instrument serving the ends of those classes. Thus the Press, as a mouthpiece of the freedom of expression, behaves negatively. It picks up good brains from the intelligentsia and intellectuality as different from the working class, and uses them to pervert straight arguments that should, if logically analysed, support the cause of workers. And the amazing part of the perversion is that the good brains, accustomed as they are to the unjust economic order and being beneficiaries of it within a certain limit, do not realise how they are used.

After helplessly witnessing the annihilation of the essence of freedom of the Press, the conscience of liberty, impaired and degenerated, sought for objectivity in subjectivity, and got an splendid excuse. It shifted the emphasis to news, objective reporting of news in newspapers; a government order interfering with this function, directly or indirectly, is an encroachment on freedom of the Press. A hundred per cent objectivity can never fit in with the



general capitalistic character of the Press. In the ingenious mind, there is no dearth of excuses; 'discretion' is the commonly-used excuse to favour subjectivity and disfavour objectivity. For example, two parallel meetings are held, one by workers and the other by proprietors, over a demand for higher wages. A newspaper that is financed and patronised by big capitalists will, in its report, cut the proceedings of the former to the bone, and give a detailed account of the latter. Anybody questioning the discrimination, will be given a plausible answer: 'The facts of the case warranted only a brief summary, and not a fuller report, of the workers' meeting. The objectivity was not interfered with; it was only summarised.' There may be occasions when discrimination can justifiably be used in the above manner; but they cannot disprove the rule that when the very basis of an institution is partisan, it cannot be objective always.

Objectivity in the Press is not, in practice, an attribute of liberty but is that of business honesty; a subjective presentation of news is an adulterated stuff, and an objective presentation is a pure stuff. A business man who becomes known as a seller of adulterated things harms himself more than the buyers; conversely, one who becomes known as a seller of pure things benefits himself. This, in short, is the definition of business honesty. Similarly, a newspaper that employs subjective approach prejudices its readers and consequently harms its own interests. In the state of things as they are, there is hardly ever any news whose publication is likely to have a practical ill effect on the vested interests. With the axe of discretion always in the hands of the editorial staff, it is always possible to maintain the facade of objectivity; and in order that readers should have faith in the business honesty of newspapers, even a news item distasteful to the vested interests is often allowed. Newspaper objectivity, like business honesty, is the quality of the saleable commodity; it is an attribute of liberty, in its limited scope, only incidentally. And the limited scope is nearly undone by another attribute: news is sacred and comment is free. Here the commentator's manoeuvring faculty is brought into play; he writes his comment so cleverly that the ill effect (referred to above) is not only undone but turned to the favour of the vested interests.

Nevertheless, liberty, as available to people under a democratic government, is strikingly different from that available under an autocratic rule; the former enables them to become, subject to the limitations inherent in the existing



economic order, their best selves, but the latter places many impediments in the way of that attainment. Democracy is undoubtedly a superior system to autocracy; while the retention of the economic status quo is common to both, the former gives men the guarantee to be their best selves, the poor in their poverty, and the rich in their riches.



## Chapter XIV

### POLITICAL EQUALITY AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

For theoreticians trying to make the form of democracy in vogue credent, the toughest job is to fit in the attribute of equality in its edifice. Seldom since the State came into being and the law began to regulate its affairs, was a rich murderer dealt with differently from a poor murderer. The law may have been undermined by the arbitrary authority of an autocratic ruler, but the arbitrariness, arising generally from mood or emotional impulse, benefited or harmed the rich and poor alike. There was equality in the abuse of authority. Nor were the rich and the poor treated differentially in the enjoyment of sun and air. The difference that nevertheless appeared arose from the difference in possessions, as it does today. A man possessing rich monetary capacity to suppress evidence and engage a brilliant costly lawyer has a chance of prejudicing the course of justice against his opponent; with the same source, he can get into his residence a better supply of sun and air. Yet it is theoretically claimed that all men are equal in these and such other spheres. In defining equality, major issues are sidetracked and minor ones are summoned to testify scum as cream.

All, it is claimed, have the right to vote, right to receive education, right to get even-handed justice, right to have access to public places, to express themselves freely, to enjoy all those things enumerated in a democratic constitution under the Fundamental Rights. But much of what is given by the constitution is taken away by those whose favour the economic order exercises discrimination. Equality is rightly defined by theoreticians as that social state in which there are no special privileges. They are satisfied with the theoretical rights; to them this is a state in which special privileges are absent. They make the initial mistake when they start from the assumption that man is a social animal and when they ignore him as an economic animal. Men came together as economic animals; it was in that capacity that they constituted themselves into society and became social animals. The entire human history is primarily the evolution of man as an economic animal;



the social animal in him only followed him like his shadow. (We say 'shadow' advisedly, because there cannot be a better word to fit in with the complacency of those who give precedence to 'social animal'.) The reversed order suits the theoreticians because then the social side gets precedence over the economic, and the negative forces coming from economic privileges can be paraded as negligible in the light of the seemingly positive forces flowing from the social equality.

Let us illustrate this point with an item of social equality. Assuming that there is free education up to the university stage—neither tuition nor books are to be paid for; both the rich and the poor have equal opportunities to benefit from it. (It is an illustration from an ideal state which generally does not exist.) And suppose a poor boy attains a better position than a rich boy at the final stage of their education. After they have finished their education, the rich boy goes to his father's big business concern and helps him to expand the scope of profit; the poor looks for a job where his attainments may be suitably rewarded. Just then come general elections to the country's legislature, and his rich colleague at the university decides to contest a seat, and recalling the genius in the poor boy, offers him an attractive salary. What is the job allotted to this poor man? He will first apply his talents to the election campaign of his colleague-employer, and later assist him in carrying out his profit-making plans. Both were social animals at the university, enjoying social equality; they were economic animals when they returned home, and as such one became exploiter, and the other exploited. There is perfect equanimity in this negated equality; accustomed to the economic life as it is, the exploited ordinarily does not feel that he is exploited, and similarly the exploiter does not feel that he is exploiting. The exploited is a pitiable case—a hypnotised mind. In principle, he is free, like his rich colleague, to contest a seat for the legislature, but in effect, he is excluded by privileges of the economic order; his theoretical right is never a practical proposition unless he accumulates enough money, even though by shady devices.

Paradoxically, the famished theoretical right is tacitly allowed to be exhibited as a healthy organ by the poor, their representatives in fact; the exhibition consists of the theoretical right's fight against the practical force of money. In reality, the fight is between small money and big money, the former believing that the difference will be



more than made good by the favourable numerical difference between poor voters and rich voters. A labour party in a democratic country is generally the representative of the poor, particularly the workers: its election fund is made up of contributions from workers, especially factory workers united by trade unions. A labour party shows itself as a poor men's party, but is not always regarded as such by all poor classes, some of whom are indifferent to a programme of 'nationalisation' of key industries, and place a labour party and a capitalists' party on par in judging how their programmes and professions will affect the national life generally. In according a parity treatment to the two, these poor are guided by a vision of the results so far as they are concerned. A capitalists' party enters election contests not as a sworn enemy of the poor but as their benefactor, and actually, when it comes to power, frames and carries out schemes aimed at adding a little to the limited happiness of the poor. Within the limitations of capitalist economy, which is assumed by all to be an unalterable fact of life, a labour party's ameliorative programme often differs from a capitalist party's programme in shape, detail and emphasis. A labour party can beat its rival only by a record of greater honesty, greater efficiency, and greater steadfastness to duty. These qualities, not being ideological, can in one case be found to be of a higher degree in a labour party, and in another, in a capitalists' party. A labour party, thus reduced in the assessment of its content value to parity with a capitalists' party, its economic inequality turns the balance against it. Its poor candidates are deplored in the quiet mouth-to-mouth propaganda as purchasable men.

This allegation or fact—whenever it is a fact—is an exposure, not so much of a poor candidate as of money as a potential factor rendering equality a negatory attribute. Verily, money has that power. When democracy made a humble beginning with a limited franchise, votes were purchased, proving the superiority of money over convictions. When the franchise was broadened, the numerosness of voters challenged the mobility of money, and money itself hesitated under the realisation of a diminishing return. It, however, gave itself a solution: those whose advice made decisions for others, different groups of people, were either bribed or given promises of decent gains from the public exchequer. In adult franchise, the role of money is bound to be restricted to indirect bribing, and this exists everywhere in one form



or another. There are many jobs under a government in which political considerations supersede merits. A labour party is not immune from temptations of the abuse of power, but a capitalist party's scope to corrupt is wider (including its control over jobs and money outside of government), and a labour party always suffers from inequality, despite all the efforts it makes to give a wholly genuine shape to the theoretical right and despite its predisposition of surrender to the inequality of money privileges existing in society. When money is the criterion of every thing in practical life, it will be idle to expect that a labour representative could never be purchased; to expect it would mean saying that a poor man is poor because he hates money. Scrupulously honest men are an exception, and they cannot be cited as an example to disprove the general conclusion.

When the freedom of expression is used in a perverted sense, exceptions are summoned to prove the rule; instances are quoted of a mine worker rising to the post of a minister, a factory worker becoming a factory owner, and a newspaper hawker raising himself to the position of a newspaper proprietor. An insignificant levelling up and an insignificant levelling down are natural phenomena of a capitalist society; cancelling each other, they maintain the rule of inequality. In practical life, inequality does not produce an exhortation to act for general levelling down but excites an incentive to rise higher—to a position of inequality. The positive proof obtained from exceptions is that of the supremacy of inequality over equality, of the sham of equality and the reality of inequality. Every poor tries to become rich, incidentally proving inequality as an ideal. A worker aspires to belong to a rich class, and so does a workers' representative, and forgets while doing so that he is promoting inequality and not equality. Such is the predominance of inequality; it has vitiated people's rational faculty.

The government of a labour party is contradictory. Its primary duty, under the constitution, is to maintain all vices of inequality, for it cannot, in the least, disturb anything that constitutes property or a device to form property. If it enacts a law, for example, to raise wages of factory workers, it satisfies one section of the poor and creates a greater amount of dissatisfaction in other sections of the poor. Very seldom does an employer cut the margin of his profit; usually he takes from consumers more than what he gives to workers in the shape of increased wages. And



among the consumers, the poor, not benefited by the wage rise, are hit harder. The rich escape the higher incidence of taxes in the same way. In fact the burden the taxed rich passes on to the poor is ordinarily higher than the amount of the increase in taxes. This general way of behaviour in capitalist society is used in a revengeful spirit if the extra tax burden comes from a labour government because capitalists must do all that they can to discredit it. Their mischiefs are a recognised part of the fundamental right about property: profits are sacred, however impure might be the methods of making them; it is the clean end of an unclean means.

Public reaction to the profiteer is that of toleration with murmers, and to the government is that of antagonism to its party: the one goes unpunished and the other is punished at the next general election. It is ultimately the reassertion of the broad fact of inequality; it is the failure of the theoretical right and the success of the practical inequality. In a capitalist society, a government of a party representing the poor is a foreign matter and cannot fit in. The little good it endeavours to do or does to the poor is obstructed or undone by the combined might of the capitalist class and in the short term of its life it is thoroughly discredited, and loses chances of getting another term at the next poll. Its failure is more eloquent to voters than its loud explanation that the first term was taken up in encountering the capitalists' mischiefs and that in the second, it would do the people some positive good. Whatever receptiveness is left in the poor people is largely covered up by the massive propaganda of the capitalists' party, charging the labour party with inefficiency, incompetence, and unfitness to rule. There is no inquest to find out the true causes of the failure. The bitterness against the government born of the extra amount of privation is usually more powerful than the cold logic, and when the propaganda supporting the spontaneous reaction is much more powerful than that arguing out the role of profiteers, the erstwhile ruling party is definitely doomed.

The inability of a government, however truly representative it may be of the poor, to make any change in the traditional modes of exploitation, shifts the voters' criterion to other spheres of public life. A party whose government can give the impression of efficiently managing public affairs is, therefore, preferred to that which does not give this impression in the same measure. A capitalists party enjoys full confidence of all those who virtually con-



rol economic life, and any party with this asset is bound to be a greater success than a rival which lacks it. The rival, in fact, gets non-cooperation, and may fail to give the impression of efficiency. The inequality between the two even helps in forming personal liking of individuals. Between two men, one rich and the other poor, both friendly and helpful to a poor voter, the former is usually preferred because with a bit of his huge possessions and the influence he wields because of those possessions, he can be of greater help. The cumulative liking is, in elections, like a bank balance which the rich party easily draws upon.

Equality, in a society of economic privileges, is something that is not felt spontaneously but is slowly grasped when advocated. The natural feeling is that of inequality, superiority in a rich man and inferiority in a poor man. To change this feeling, political education comes as an advocate. It contrasts democracy with absolutism, and shows how the victimised and humiliated subjects have become free citizens. A police officer under authoritarian rule was law unto himself and could behave as shabbily as his temper dictated, but under democratic rule, he functions with his mind tamed by the legal provision that all citizens are equally entitled to the enjoyment of fundamental rights, and his only job as a police officer is to put up an accused for trial; he cannot punish him on his own authority. Formerly, the authorities' temper had a free flow, and the subjects had the feeling of being in chains; now the authorities' temper is chained and the subjects are free. As long as one is a law-abiding citizen, one is equal as a citizen, as a political animal, to any other in the land. But economic inequality cannot co-exist with political equality in the manner visualised by democracy. Since economic privileges possess the power to corrupt, and corruption has the power to lead to economic privileges, that is to make a poor police officer a rich man, political equality is confronted with a challenge. For example, a rich employer beats his servant in the manner of the days of absolutism; the servant approaches police with the complaint that he has not only been beaten but also humiliated as a citizen of a democratic country. The police officer, after recording the complaint, meets the rich man, and explains to him the law under which he can be arrested or detained for questioning. The rich man is shocked by the prospect of humiliation and offers a bribe. The police officer pockets the money, and in his report shifts the blame to the com-



plainant. This behaviour is not merely a case of corruption, but illustrates how economic inequality can assert itself against political equality. Under the absolute regime, he was law unto himself; now he can pervert the law. Then he gave free vent to his provocation; now he behaves quietly.

Political equality, skillfully made distinct in the midst of pervading economic inequality, is a manifestation of evolutionary civilisation. In other words, it is a part of evolutionary self-interest. The long time of evolution is a process of conversion of violence into willingness. A man in primitive days, if he decided to relieve another of his possession, resorted to violence as the means to the end. Later on, while violence continued, certain devices were thought of by men of evil designs by which the victims willingly gave away part of their possessions. The choice of violence or willingness as the easier way depended on circumstances of the men. Violence was the way of the lion, and the other way was that of the wizard. Government authorities, in whose minds the consciousness of force resided as the principal factor that distinguished them from common people, used threats of force or actual force to gratify themselves at the expense of their victims. An act of violence on the part of a government servant excites greater condemnation than a quiet proceeding, an illicit gain being common to both practices. In its evolutionary process, civilisation has developed a tendency for the quiet manner as against violence. The policeman's behaviour, exemplified above, portrays the expediency necessitated by the evolutionary change. He cannot ignore the environments, even as autocratic rulers could not ignore the people's urge for democratisation of political institutions. He behaves consistently with the inconsistency of the co-existence of economic inequality and political equality. He is proceeding with the march of civilisation, and cannot brush aside temptations that hold out the prospect of a privileged status.

Political equality regards a profiteer and his victim as equal to each other. The one is free to profiteer, and the other is free to protest. Both are marching with the progress of civilisation; one has trained his mind to listening to the shouts of protests as an accompaniment of profits, and the other gets an outlet to relieve himself of the irritation. In political equality, scarcity and abundance are equal; an unemployed in distress is equal to an employer. The former wants a job, and whoever gives it, is his bene-



factor, and he will remain beholden to him as long as he remembers the period of his distress; his benefactor's political advice will be his political belief. The unemployed cannot go to an employer to ask for a job as a matter of right. If the employer is not inclined to appoint a particular man, and the man is on the point of starvation, there will be an exhibition of predemocracy feudal behaviour; the unemployed, throwing his political equality to the wind, will make an offering of terms of flattery and present himself as the most humble and obedient servant. Even if he realises that the humiliating performance into which he has been thrown is the direct result of the economic system in which one is a humble beggar and the other is virtually a feudal lord, he cannot, having been benefited with a job, declare then and there what he feels; the self-denial of the right inherent in him is not his choice, it is forced upon him. The power of economic inequality can humble the political equality in numerous ways.

How can those who wield this tremendous power consider themselves equal, in any sense save that of expediency, with those placed under their economic domination? Even a government servant, who is beyond the pale of this domination but who comes across a temptation promising him a greater economic status than the one provided by his present situation, succumbs to dishonesty. In the exercise of the discretionary powers he enjoys by virtue of his office, he is used by a contractor, for example, to the mutual benefit of both and to the detriment of the public exchequer. He can be made by temptations to act against the interests of the poor and for those of a moneyed man. He is a typical case of democracy functioning under the supremacy of economic inequality. He does not behave in the arrogant feudal manner, and does not directly do any harm to the exhibitive attributes of democracy. By his dishonest behaviour he increases the incidence of economic inequality and consequently throws another rope round the political equality already bandaged. Government servants, like men outside of government, are divided into many economic classes, and being part of the general economic system, they cannot be expected to live up to an ideal behaviour. Honesty is an optional attribute to them as to others. Honest men among them may be outnumbering the dishonest ones, but the former's virtuous behaviour is the result either of moral impact or fear of punishment, and not of hatred for the benefit that the illicit money brings. Seldom is there a trace, in the upright behaviour,



of the consciousness that economic disparity is the biggest obstacle in the evolution of true political equality. There is, on the one side, the absence of this consciousness, and there is on the other supreme consciousness that all people together constitute democratic machinery.

The definitions of different words of virtue are what traditions in the system of economic inequality have given them. An honest government servant knows that out of a hundred million worth contract the contractor makes, say 25 million, and feels that as he has made no gain in the shape of bribe, his conscience is clean. This exactly is all that government expects from him. How the profit of 25 million creates social inequalities and moral degradation in society is not his concern. There is no question about it in the definition of honesty which guides his conduct. Compared to one who succumbs to temptations, he is a better man, worthy of emulation. The same honesty guided the conduct of an officer of an imperial country, for example, when his countrymen were exploiting millions of men in a dependent country. He was not concerned with how the resources of his government were augmented by imperial resources and how an immoral conduct secured them.

A comprehensive vision of honesty can be had only when the mind's eye crosses the circumference within which the definition is imprisoned. Then the conscience will issue forth question after question. Is an honest man of an imperial country not part of the economic affluence resulting from the exploitation of its subject countries? To what extent has the high level of culture and civilisation of his country resulted from the economic affluence? Does not culture or civilisation (as it is commonly appreciated) rise with the rise in economic status and fall with the fall in that status? Is that not the reason for the backwardness of the so-called backward countries? Is it fair for a country possessing a high degree of scientific and technological efficiency to use it as a means of exploiting other countries and consequently affect their economic, cultural and social life? Are not democratic principles trampled in subject countries even by those who professedly observe them in their own country? Is not this self-deception? Is not exploitation of one country by another the extension of the inconsistency of the economic inequality and political equality obtaining in the latter? Is an honest employee of a dishonest master, who manipulates his accounts with direct or indirect help of the employee to cheat the income tax



authorities and who sells spurious goods as genuine, not an accomplice? Is the phantom of the political equality tolerated by profit-earners because despite it they can maintain economic inequality of long ages? (Such questions can be multiplied.)

The struggle for what is called full-fledged democracy in Europe and the empire-making by Europeans in Asia and Africa started almost simultaneously. The same man breathed freedom by one lung and exhaled slavery from the other. In his own mind, there was no inconsistency. At home the much-adumbrated principles of liberty and equality were like the children's shouting in the family, and he tolerated them because they did not interfere with the aim of his life. Abroad, he suppressed them as the feudal lord did the complaining aggrieved. He used his faculty of craftiness, fraud, treachery, and military discipline to serve his interests and undermine those of his victims. He would have behaved similarly in his own country if the demand for political equality were accompanied by a demand for the abolition of economic inequality. He allowed political equality to come up with equanimity because he was convinced of its harmlessness. In the early stages of the struggle for democracy, the industrialist in him thought of a political equality that would enable him to rank with the feudal lord; he thought that with the possession of that equality, he would be able to serve his interests better. He was a little disturbed when the workers also demanded the same right, but was recomposed when he realised that the power of his money would negative the equality conceded to the workers. Throughout the ages he has been behaving as a practical man. He would relinquish an empire if he realised that it involved him in costly wars and that without it he could make his profits in peace. As far as possible, he would see to it that his successors were those who would maintain the economic order in which he and they would continue to exploit the poor.

The simultaneous rise of democracy and European empires made the inconsistency of economic inequality and political equality less poignant. The gains the imperial countries made from their dependencies made a favourable impact on the entire economy of the former; the humble worker also gained according to his humble position. Unemployment was reduced to the minimum, starvation was



liquidated with unemployment allowances, the wages fixed ensured essential needs of life, opportunities for jobs and promotions increased both at home and in the dependencies. This economic betterment of the poor was not the result of the growth of democracy, but of the empires; yet the guaranteed minimum was claimed as a gift of democracy—it was claimed that it enabled common people to assert their political equality. Hardly was it every realised that what facilitated the claim to be proclaimed had its motive power in the suppression of democratic rights in the dependencies.

When humiliation of the feudal days was disappearing in Europe under the impact of democracy and with the help of imperial gains, it was being assiduously maintained in the dependencies because feudal lords there were accepted as a pillar of the empires. The feudal behaviour had been the same everywhere before the arrival of democracy—before the arrival of civilisation at a new mile stone; it was as exacting and as humiliating in the dependencies as in Europe. In the wake of imperial gains coincident with the evolution of democratic principles, feudal humiliation in Europe began to yield place to political equality, but began to be tightened in the dependencies as from this humiliation essentially flowed certain manifestations of political equality in Europe. The land workers, who had traditionally been treated as serfs by the feudal lords, were thrown many steps downward when their economic condition became worse due to double exploitation, by the feudal lords and imperial rulers. The poor of other classes were similarly reduced to a humbler plight. As the machine age and technology were advancing in Europe—in imperial countries—unemployment in the dependencies was, like a corollary, increasing, which meant that men were becoming humbler and humbler. Jobs given to ten men, out of a thousand aspirants, were treated by them as gifts; they remained gifts despite humiliation. As long as the dependencies were politically unfree, humiliation was interpreted by nationalist leaders as the result of subjection—their approach was political and not economic. But when freedom came and political equality was proclaimed—it was not wholly absent even under the imperial rule—the cause of humiliation appeared in its correct perspective. Then, it was felt that the direct cause lay, to a large extent, in the country itself, in the economic inequality which would persist whatever the system of government. Unemployment and economic distress persisted, and with



them naturally the humiliation. The subservience of the poor to the rich in the erstwhile dependencies is greater than in the erstwhile imperial countries because in the former even the essential needs are not ensured to the multitude of people.

Subjection, in reality, is not a political term; it is an economic term. An imperial country may allow the people of a subject country as much enjoyment of liberty and equality as is available to its own people, and yet exploit them economically. In India, for example, when she was a subject country of the British, liberty and equality of democratic variety were available (in the 20th century) except for the durations of the civil disobedience movements. The vehicle of propaganda for freedom was no doubt political but the contents it carried were economic: the British, it was repeatedly asserted, were 'robbing' India. The right emphasis on economy, incidentally gave the people (again speaking about India) a right perspective for the future. When years passed away after the arrival of independence, the poor asked in frustration: 'we continue as poor as we were under the British, and as subservient to internal economic lords as then.' There was no trace in their protest of any concession for liberty and 'equality' they had achieved. Not that these attributes of democracy were invisible to the naked eye, but they had these nearly in the same measure under British rule as well. 'They,' one might say, did not include the peasants, the subjects of feudal lords, whose order was abolished after the arrival of independence. On the other hand, one might say, factory workers generally enjoyed the same trade union rights as were available to their counterparts in England. Abolition of landlordism is not an essential duty of a democratic government; it is a part of its economic programme, even as regulating hours of work for workmen is not an essential ingredient of democracy, but is a consideration for their health. Such a consideration can be shown even by an autocratic or dictatorial government. Therefore as subjection is an economic term, political equality is a subject and economic inequality is its imperial master; it remains the master whether the form of government is imperialistic, monarchic, or democratic.

The amount of subjection of political equality to economic inequality varies under different systems of government. It is higher in a imperial country to the degree it is lower in a subject country. Moral, social and cultural standards also differ accordingly. India is as much a de-



mocratic country as the United Kingdom and the United States are, but in India the subjection of political equality is far greater than in the latter two countries. Here an unemployed—the number runs into millions—is a miserable being; here he and his family starve or are on the verge of starvation, and he is prepared to be humiliated to any extent to get a job. Even eloquent advocates of democracy accept and encourage the flattery of feudal variety; they exploit helplessness for their political gains. In their offices, they are feudal lords, and at public platforms they are democrats. Between two men, one resorting to flattery, and the other restrained by human dignity, the former generally is happy as he gets the boon, and the latter is left grumbling that dignity has no value even under a democratic system. The former is a matter-of-fact man, realising that political equality, that is human dignity, is the shadow, and the way he employs the substance.

The overlordship of economic inequality is similarly reflected in elections to the legislatures. A people's party, like a labour party, as distinct from a capitalists' party, is well nigh impossible, because workers of assured monthly income are firstly an insignificant minority and secondly their emoluments are so small that they cannot raise a sizable election fund. Disparities being too great, a single industrialist can easily throw away more money for an election fund than the combined contribution of a hundred thousand workers. Made conscious by years of propaganda for freedom, the millions were waiting for the fruit to fall from the imperial tree, but when it came, the big purse grasped it and became the custodian of democracy. It was conscious of its power as pivot of democracy, and was verily approached for election funds by the party which symbolised the freedom movement. The combination was a marriage between vested interests and those who once decried those interests. The result was, quite naturally, the dominating influence of vested interests over the protagonists of democracy and economic justice. It showed more vividly, than a similar changeover did in Europe a century before, the power of economic inequality to subordinate political equality to its will. All measures adopted by the democratic government for economic amelioration of the people eventually turned out as means of making the rich richer and therefore more powerful to lord it over the political equality. The machinery, through which the imperial power had thrown millions of manual workers out of job, passed into the hands of indigeneous machine owners.



as if they were the natural successors. A country, released from the bondage of its imperial master, would not return to the pre-machine economy—would not be allowed to do so by the real repositories of democracy—and since it would not be in a position, in the foreseeable future, to match with the so-called advanced countries of the west in raising its employment potential on the basis of heavy exports, it could not hope to produce as much employment as the old imperial powers and colonisers had done in their own countries. (Their employment potential is not the result of their internal economy alone; a major contributor to it is the market abroad.)

And the so-called party system, supposed to be an essential constituent of democracy, owes much of its sustaining power to imperialism and colonialism, which made it possible even for a labour party to have a sizable election fund. (The liquidation of empires has not liquidated economic exploitation which continues in a different way.) An election fund is nowhere discussed as an attribute of democracy, and yet it is like steam to a steam engine; democracy, as it is practised, will come to standstill without funds for contests. What is the function of money in the hands of a profit-maker? It must swell itself by any device. In the early periods of democracy, its function, in the political form, was to buy votes like commodities, and collect the bills with trade profit from the public exchequer whose control they acquired with the investment. When the so-called public opinion condemned the buying, a 'clean' form of democratic functioning was given, with money-earning remaining intact as the main object of participation in democracy. The buying of votes yielded place to election funds; voters would not be corrupted but a costly election machinery would be put up performing the same function as the machine did in rendering manual workers as helpless beings in their individual capacity. And a rich men's party appeared like a joint stock company with the intention of virtually appropriating democracy. Workers' representatives later on endeavoured to meet the challenge by putting up a rival party with workers' humble contributions, but they put up a poor show.

Individuals' liberty and equality was thus capitalised into parties; those who did not agree with the programmes of the election-worthy parties—worthiness resulting from funds—and could not collect a sizable fund were 'de-democratised' to a considerable extent; only those individuals who were rich enough to compete with the resources of the



parties could think of entering the contest against party candidates. And even then, they would have scanty chances of success in view of the parties being regarded by most voters as the real contestants. The poor would have no opportunity even to struggle with chances. The party system is claimed as superior to individuals' contests on the ground that each contesting party presents to the voters its programme of work which it would carry out in the event of it being returned to power. If the experience of different democratic countries be regarded as enough evidence to give a verdict on the real effect of election manifestoes, it can be asserted that comparative merits of the manifestoes are seldom the criterion to influence voting. The criterion, generally speaking, is the past record of a party and the expectation from it in the future, and this is a matter-of-fact criterion, for every party has to proceed on the same economic assumption—not to disturb the disturbing elements in the economy of the country. Even those that give the impression of a departure from the assumption have, in effect, to keep within the circumference of the economic order. In the ultimate analysis, efficiency is left as the major factor of the criterion.

In every democratic country, parties are an offshoot or bystanders of the mechanised industry, that is, of huge profit-making devices; even those that do not appear to be bearing that character expect to be, or are, helped by the industry. If the two main constituents of the party system are the capitalists' party and the labour party, one aims at using its majority in the legislature to promoting profit-making proposition of its constituents, and the other to deriving from the industry as much concession for workers as is possible within the limitations. The remaining multitude are not their genuine concern; the concern about them is equal to the expediency necessitated by the amount of influence different sections of the multitude exercise on voting. A government has to show awareness of the multifarious aspects of the economic and political life, and its policies must, as far as possible, reflect the wishes and requirements of the people in national and international affairs. As far as this awareness is concerned, there is no difference between a capitalists' party and a labour party, notwithstanding the difference in their approaches. But their essential character, as satellites of the industry, remains; and so remains the fact that the party system has virtually 'de-democratised' many well-meaning



and democratically-conscious individuals; it is another exposure of the myth of political equality.



## Chapter XV

### SURPLUS VALUE RE-EXAMINED

Marx has given a simple, precise term for exploitation of human labour for profit—surplus value. The worker is paid as wages an amount less than the value of his work; the difference between the wages paid to him and the real value of the work is the surplus value which is appropriated by the employer. (Surplus value as defined and elaborated by Marx is well known and need not be explained here at length.)

The term calls for re-examination. Exploitation of working men by non-working men has existed ever since the State and the middleman appeared in the economic life of society. The middleman's exploitation of the working man was not looked upon with equanimity by honest thinkers; Aristotle was the first to record his protest. But the middlemen has been a conventional part of the economic life, and passed almost unnoticed, so far as the general mass of people were concerned, until the concentrated exploitation at a mass scale came as a glare to focuss attention on him. Formerly, the working man was not ordinarily a servant or serf of the middleman; he was his own master, and as he regarded the middleman as seller of his product, he did not see the element of exploitation in the profit-making middlemanship; when his work fatigued him, he retired. He determined his own hours of work. When the machinery arrived, the determination and the realisation of fatigue no longer belonged to him; he was a servant, a serf actually. Never before had the means of livelihood been so torturous and so debilitating as now. He became a pitiable man. Never before had working men excited so much concern in the breasts of sympathetic people as the plight of factory workers, especially children and women, did in the early periods of the industrial revolution. For the first time, the working man—the factory worker to be precise—was the topic of public discussion; and for the first time the economic paraphernalia of society was dealt with rationally, particularly by Marx.

It was thus the machine which sharpened the crude thought that had existed for at least two millenniums. The



machine, in this context, was the concentrating force of exploitation, and an instrument of multiplying profits. But it was not invented for creating surplus value; surplus value was an incidental episode. The main function of the machine was to relieve man of the drudgery of manual labour—the machine came as the monstrous substitute for manual labour. It virtually came as a monster of mythology; it undertook to do in a minute what many men did in hours. Expressed in economic language, it gave man a considerable surplus value; it enabled him to produce many times more than he did with his hands working on the primitive tools. To whom should this surplus value belong? It is an intricate question. The answer is spread over the numerous pages of human history. Throughout the long age of human race, there have been inventors and imitators, the former few and the latter many. For example, the man who invented spade and sickle gave his fellow men a labour-saving device; he raised man's capacity and created an extra value. But he did not claim a share or royalty. No share or royalty was claimed by the inventor of iron either. The extra value was no doubt shared by iron manufacturers, iron-smiths and carpenters, but they were all beneficiaries of the extra value created by the inventors. The invention was passed on gratis to those who needed it; it could not be measured by any material reward. It was like an improved method of agriculture discovered by one cultivator, who gladly shared it with others. His advice enabled many to make an extra gain, but his own satisfaction was that many had gained like himself. Similarly, an inventor's reward consisted in the satisfaction he derived from the accomplishment of the image he conceived. The extra value thus created was not a materialistic consideration to be exploited by inventors or advisers. Nevertheless, every invention, big or small, created a surplus value. It was appropriated by the producer, as the results of more favourable rain and sun are appropriated by the cultivator.

But the inventions of the machine age came with the appropriators of the surplus value they (inventions) proposed to create. They were stupendous in size, naturally because they aimed at relieving the manual labour at a stupendous scale, that is, they held out the prospect of creating a stupendous amount of surplus value. A textile machine, for example, was not a spinning wheel or a loom that used to be within the purchasing capacity of a spinning or weaving workman. It assumed a different



character: it came like an invader and not a helper. This contradictory character in the machine as a labour-saving device was not an inherent part of it; it was made by accumulated money in the hands of a minority of people. It represented the cumulative surplus value that the minority had been making out of the peasant and the worker. Therefore the invention that should have gone to the workers concerned as a matter of course went into the hands of the possessors of the cumulative surplus value. Coins, and not currency notes, were the money then; much of the surplus value, converted into coins, lay idle. Heaps of guineas or other coins were not land, were not hens, and were not man's hands; when not used as investment they produced nothing. They enjoyed purchasing power because they had been substituted for barter, but they represented a freak of the metallic exchange system, because they did not form part of the economic activity of society.

This accumulated money found in the machine a means to multiply itself; it bought the machine, and appropriated a thing which belonged to workmen. The machine was not made by money; it was purchased by it. Whatever the labour-saving capacity of a machine, it is essentially the product of human hands, that is, the result of labour, facilitated by inventions. The investor does not provide either labour or invention. Any robber, with his accumulated booty, can buy a machine.

Let us now look at the proposition conversely. If the means of the mechanised production belonged to workers, either as a co-operative enterprise or in any other shape, who would have appropriated the surplus value? The answer apparently will be, the workers themselves. And it would be suggested that here the surplus value would cease to be surplus value; the entire value of the work would go to the workers to whom it should go. So that no fraction of value might go to middlemen, the workers might run their own shops. This proposition gives rise to several questions. To whom does the surplus value inherent in the mass production machinery belong? How is the value of the goods produced by a factory, from which, if it belongs to a capitalist, surplus value is made, determined? Will the criterion of determination in the case of a workers' production establishment be different? What is the definition of a middleman?

Surplus value, in terms of money, is the difference between cost price and sale price; the greater the diffe-



rence between the two, the higher will be the incidence of surplus value. When the factory producing textiles, for example, appeared for the first time, the sale prices were determined by the current market prices; (in a bid to eliminate the manual worker—the primitive spinning wheel and loom—the prices of the factory product were kept a little lower than the current market prices). But the basis of the current market prices was enormously different from what should have been the basis for prices of the factory product; the cost of production of the factory product was much less than that of the hand product—there was considerable difference between the labour units employed by the two respectively. Thus, while the cost of production came down considerably on account of the factory, the sale price remained almost the same as it had been before the arrival of the machinery. The difference between the old cost price and the new cost price represented a surplus value created by and belonging to the machine. But the machine, being a lifeless thing, had no use for the surplus it had created. To whom then should the surplus go?

The inventors made no claim; and all the mental and manual workers of whose labour the machinery was the sum total made no claim either. The capitalist who purchased it was supposed to have already paid for the mental and manual work that had gone into it; this payment was supposed as the advance sharing by the men concerned in the surplus value that was yet to be made. How much of this payment was appropriated as surplus value by idle capitalists functioning in the process of preparing the raw material and manufacturing the machinery is another question? The pertinent point in the present context is that the surplus value left with the owner of the machinery still represented a wide difference between the old cost price and the new cost price, and the question—to whom should the surplus go—remained largely unanswered. It would remain unanswered even if it be suggested that the entire surplus should belong to that entire body of workers who (1) prepared raw materials for the machine, (2) manufactured the machinery, and (3) worked the machinery to produce commodities for consumption. Why? Because this combined man-power was numerically much less than that man-power which, under the pre-machinery system, was needed to produce an equal amount of commodities. Therefore the surplus value occasioned by the machinery did not really belong either to the capitalist



or the workers. It was a vicious thing: accumulated, it would be so enormous that whosoever retained it would get richer and be a disturbing factor in the economic life of the community. A few hundred workers, including their middlemen at the shope, would be the prototype of a few capitalists and their middle men.

That as the advantages accruing from a spade or a spinning wheel and loom belonged to the worker, so the advantages accruing from the machinery should belong to the worker will not be an apt analogy. If the spinning wheel was an individual, the spinning mill was society, a collective manifestation. To the spinning wheel, the motive power was provided by man's hand; to the machine, it was provided by electric energy, which not only reduced to the barest minimum the physical exertion the worker used to contribute, but also reduced the need of man power. The logical result of the change from the spinning wheel age to the machine age should be the proportional reduction in the working hours of workmen. If that is not done, and working hours of the spinning wheel age are maintained, the machinery, whether it is owned by the capitalist or by workers themselves, will render many workmen unemployed. This is what the arrival of the machinery really did, and had not the export of the machine-made goods increased the employment potential of the machine, there would have been terrible unemployment; what the exports actually did was to shift, through abject political power, local misery to distant foreign lands.

The real surplus value is thus created by the power of the machine as the substitute of man's physical power. The moment the machine ceases to play the expedient role of keeping up a show of nearly full employment in an exporting country, it will have a disturbing effect on the economy of the country. Let us discuss this point hypothetically to get a clear picture. If all the workers relieved by a factory (when it first appeared) of their individual vocations were employed by it, the amount of work falling to the share of each would have been insignificant compared to what he did formerly. He would have come to occupy, in that case, an invidious position; many, in whose vocations, the machine did not and could not figure, would have continued to be required to put in the usual amount of labour. As long as the mass production machinery continues to be private property, whether of capitalists or workers, the surplus value inherent in it will continue to be a disturbing factor. Since machinery as a power



affects the entire community, it should belong to the community; then only can it be prevented from behaving as a disturber and fitted appropriately into the economic equilibrium of the community.

Science and technology have been making rapid strides. In the so-called advanced countries, a few men, with the help of mechanical devices, can produce staple food for a hundred people. The essential needs of the entire population can be provided by the work of an insignificant minority. A decrepit has only to lower the switch with his finger, and the whole city is lighted—a work on which, before electricity came, hundreds of lampmen were employed. These illustrations create an approach which is bound to transcend the limitation set by the term surplus value.

The need for physical exertion diminishes as technology develops. A single man can, with the help of an earth-lifting machine, and with negligible physical exertion, replace a hundred men. Earth-digging is a strenuous work, and carrying earth in baskets to the site where it is required is a little less so. But men willingly offer themselves for strenuous work because it is the means of their livelihood, and if the redeemer of the exacting physical exertion is also the snatcher of livelihood, it will not be welcomed but will be opposed. The surplus value inherent in the earth-lifting machine, for example, creates a problem to men, whom it has replaced. Compared to the disputed problem of surplus value between the capitalist and the worker, this problem is of much greater concern. The real problem posed by the machine is that of the surplus value inherent in it: if a few people can prepare for a hundred all the essential things they need, what will the rest do? The question opens a new vista for society; it calls for a reorganisation of the entire economic structure of society. For thousands of years, people in every country had been divided into different working classes, and the father's profession was usually the son's profession: in some countries society was divided into castes on the basis of professions. Work, being hereditary, was generally assured, and though the system under which surplus was exploited by parasites existed then too, there was no fear of large scale unemployment.

The machine, no doubt, reduces the need for human labour, and consequently threatens to create unemployment; but it does not reduce food supply; on the contrary it has increased that supply. Therefore, there may be



unemployment, but there should be no denial of food and other needs whose supply has not decreased but increased. The answer to the riddle is, in common parlance, simple: an unemployed ceases to earn, and therefore ceases to have purchasing power—money. Never before was the role of money more mischievous than as it began with the advent of the machinery. It gave some individuals power to purchase machines, and it denied many the capacity to buy the essential needs of life by denying them the opportunity to work. Its character as the means of exchange and as the substitute of the barter system had become dubious, rather abusive, even before the machine age, because much of it did not represent labour; now it allowed itself to be used as a device to starve the multitude, the very multitude to whom it was given as a simple, easy way to exchange one another's products.

Currency, after the arrival of the machine, was in crisis; the crisis was not pronounced as such because it was thoroughly exploited by those who possessed the bulk of currency. It presented an inverse state of famine. In a famine, the buying capacity of currency diminishes in the ratio of diminution of foodgrains; in the crisis coming in the wake of the machine, the food supply did not diminish, but the role of money was so terribly disturbed that there was an effect of famine without a famine. Despite the appropriation of workers' surplus value by some parasites, money as the regulator of the economic life had been behaving tolerably; now its position as regulator was challenged. It was faced with a dilemma: how to give food to the unemployed when there was no lack of it and why should the unemployed be denied food when there was no work for him? Formerly, money was not the cause of employment, it was the result; it was an agent and the worker was the master. Now, its position was reversed; it became both the giver and depriver of employment. It was like a arbitrary autocrat; it deprived men of their means of livelihood and threw them into starvation cells, as an autocrat sometimes did causelessly. By conspiring with the surplus value inherent in the machine, it gave itself the monopolistic position. In the ultimate analysis, it made out its own case for its deposition from the seat of power to which it had risen from its role as the means of exchange. If the consequences of the way it would use its power in the machine age had been foreseen and if the men who constituted the vital economic structure of the community had risen in revolt and repudiated it, they



would have hailed the arrival of the machinery as man's greatest friend and made it part of the economic structure in a way that could benefit the entire community. But there was no revolt, and currency remained as a writ of the political power. The writ recognised money as property, and property was sacrosanct. The political power did not interfere with the conspiracy between money and machine, and was incidentally rewarded for its non-interference when the conspirators spread their tentacles outside the borders of their countries in the form of empires. It was postponement and not a solution of the problem that the conspiracy posed.

The surplus value of a machine is generally equal to the man power made surplus by it. To illustrate the point, if five men, with the mechanised process of agriculture, produced as much food as fifty did by primitive methods, the surplus value of the machine will make 45 men surplus. Even under primitive methods, the peasant was producing not only for himself and his family but for some others. The ratio of peasants to these 'some others' differed from country to country, but everywhere a substantial number of working men in the population—a substantial majority—were food producers. Of the others, some were engaged in cloth-making, tool making and other things of utility to the peasant; and the rest were broadly divided into two classes: (1) parasites, and (2) those who engaged themselves in professions whose products were of use to parasites exclusively. These two classes were in a flourishing condition when the machine arrived, and provided traditional solutions for partial utilisation of the surplus man power. The parasites, to whose coffers the machine was making additions incessantly, welcomed new luxury articles, and the class living on its patronage created new avenues of employment and attracted towards itself some of the surplus men. The new avenues with the exports accounting for the utilisation of part of the surplus man power provided an improvised solution to an 'advanced' country.

To it the surplus value of the machine came like the wealth of an empire. It could not afford to lose sight of the improvised solution provided by exports, and rightly felt that it must maintain its foreign market. As technology was advancing and transferring more of physical exertion from man to machine, the exports assumed greater importance as a solution. A country where technology had made greater strides than in other industrialised countries,



needed an expanding foreign market. It would maintain it even if it had to sell its production on credit, and even if it had to stoop to interfering in political affairs of the importing country.

History is witness to the fact that ever since men took to settled life, exploitation has been changing its shape. Machine is its latest shape; it can be used as an imperial sceptre. As the production machine possesses the physical power of many men, so the war machine possesses the power of so many men—in fact numberless men—to kill. The gun was a wonder when it first appeared; a man possessing it could kill any number of men who did not have it. Now a nuclear weapon can kill millions of people. What is the surplus value of a nuclear weapon? A soldier is engaged ostensibly to defend his country but actually to kill the enemy, whether the enemy is an attacker or a victim. If he kills more men of the enemy, he is a greater hero than others of his rank, and is not only given a monetary reward over and above his pay, but is also decorated with honours. In ancient days, he did the killing with bow and arrow; then he did it with gun, and now he can do it with a nuclear weapon. Now he can kill millions with an insignificant exertion to his limbs. Since it was not the inventor of bow and arrow who got or even shared the reward coming out of the killing, the killer of the nuclear warfare can claim a reward as many times greater as the number of the killed is in proportion to the killing done by his ancient predecessor. He can at least claim, on the basis of the theory of surplus value, as much pay as was given to the many soldiers who did as much killing as is done by him singly. But he is a servant like a mill worker; the surplus value of the machine, whether it is a helper or killer, does not belong to the worker. The surplus value of the nuclear weapon belongs to government, and as government, in effect, belongs to those who enjoy the surplus value of the machinery functioning in the economic life of the community, the surplus value of the nuclear weapon also, in effect, belongs to them. It is their imperial sceptre, more powerful than the sceptre of the most powerful emperor the world has known. A country's superiority in the machinery of production and the machinery of destruction over other countries, particularly the exploitable backward countries, is like the superiority of an imperial country lord it over other countries.

How can such a superior country lord it over other countries? The world is divided into countries, selfishly called



nations, and as the divisions are accidents of history, and not the results of a rational distribution of the world's resources, some possess very rich resources, and others very poor. The political or democratic definition of nation ignores the conspicuous irrationality; nay, it confirms it, in the same way as a fundamental right of a democratic constitution declares inequitable possessions of property sacrosanct. Democracy and nations (as they exist today) are contradictory terms; the area and resources a country possesses was not given to it by a majority vote of the people of the world. These came to it as legacy from an invader or through colonisation, in the course of which the local people were thrown out or destroyed or reduced to the position of serfs or manual workers. A few hundred thousand people 'invaded' a whole continent, subordinated the local people to their will by their superior force, declared the continent as their country, and, in the wake of democracy, called themselves a nation. All the resources of this country, even if these far exceeded the proportion due to its people according to an equitable distribution of the world's resources, belonged to it by right. It was a magnified picture of what the individuals did inside a country, some appropriating disproportionate share of the resources. So a nation, possessing disproportionate share, was a case of individuals doing injustice to individuals, and the whole nation, doing injustice to other nations hit by the disproportion.

A country possessing a big favourable disproportion is economically superior to an empire of several countries each of which suffers from adverse disproportion. It will be ahead of the imperial country and all countries of disproportionate share if it uses its resources fully and properly. And because of the rich resources, it is bound to be ahead of them in the exploitation of science and technology. Its surplus resources supplemented by the surplus value of the machinery will confront it with a problem: what to do with the enormous produce and how to maintain employment? With its disproportionate share and abundant modern destructive power, it is an empire to all intents and purposes, but it condemns imperialism and upholds democracy because democracy by its definition ensures it safety, ideologically. Therefore, it comes out as a champion of democracy by conviction. It champions the cause of democracy in the countries that are backward largely because of the accident of disproportion and imperial victimisation. In actual fact the championing of the cause of democracy



is championing the cause of property as a sacrosanct manifestation of fundamental rights; that is, of those who are possessors of disproportionate property and are free to add to it either by internal enterprises or foreign trade.

Foreign trade has always been—since the dark ages of history—a unity of interests between parasites of one country and those of the other, and not a unity of interests between the parasites and workers of the same country. It has been a means of exchange of such commodities as enjoyers of surplus value of one country get from the other. It has been one of the many ways of the utilisation of surplus value. Exchange of commodities is, to some extent, possible between workers of one country and those of another, but in reality, it is done for the enjoyers of surplus value. It had existed for thousands of years before democracy arrived and nationalism was paraded as an attribute of democracy. It was not questioned but adopted by democracy that connived at the fact that the amount of goods exported to a foreign country represented a part of the surplus value of many workers, and that it was an undemocratic act inasmuch as it sacrificed the interests of many for the few, and it was an antinational act because it sacrificed the interests of a country's citizens for foreigners. This argument cannot be rebutted by the plea that exports were cancelled by imports, because the people of the other country have the similar charge against the exporters of their country.

The parity between exports and imports is however passed as an economically harmless arrangement between two countries. But as business deals between profit-seekers of different countries were not regarded as an antinational act, the excess of imports over exports was tolerated with equanimity, and the balance was made good by payment in gold. Compared to essential commodities whose export might mean a certain amount of curtailment in the daily consumption of the people, gold payment might be contended as a better alternative. But gold itself is a commodity, one of the costliest commodities; every country habitually conserves it, and of the few of its justifiable uses for imports one is to buy food to save people from a calamity like famine. Such use is a truly national use of a country's gold reserve. But nationalism is often deliberately flouted and luxury articles instead of food are imported even during famines. Exporters and importers of different countries are united by a mutual self-interest, like nationals of the same country. But if one country is passing through a



famine and the other with whom it had had trade relations is in a position to spare food, they would behave as foreign nationals; they would not think of exportation of food-grains unless they were assured of at least as much profit as they gained from trade in the usual luxury goods.

To exploiters, national barriers do not exist, though it is possible for those of one country to profit more by common exploitation. For example, a poor, backward country exports a large quantity of hides and skins to a rich country, while a majority of its own people go barefoot, because they lack purchasing power. The exports of hides and skins represent the surplus value of that country's workers which is put to a profitable proposition by a conspiracy between the exploiters of the exporting and importing countries. The exporters and others enjoying an affluent status are not affected by the exports of hides and skins; they can each in fact afford to possess, and actually possess, more than one pair of footwear. In the importing country, men of affluence give themselves the similar luxury and also add to their profits by exporting goods manufactured from imports. In the importing country, which is economically better off than the exporting country, most of poor people also possess footwear and the means to buy more from the imported supply. But they too cannot escape the effect of a deal between the exploiters of the two countries. Suppose the country importing hides and skins sends in return motor cars, motor cycles, etc.; the workers of that country will rightly complain that while the dabblers in foreign trade and other exploiters have each a motor car or a pair of cars and also motor cycles, even a hundred workers do not have a single car between them, and that while the exploiter uses the car for a joy ride with his girl friends, the workers do not possess a vehicle to carry their sick dependents to the hospital. There is only a difference of degrees in the annoyance and grievance caused to the mass of the people of the rich country and the mass of the people of the poor country. In the latter, every motor car possessor is the cause of denial of footwear to hundreds of people, and the possessors as a class deny footwear to millions of men, women and children. Yet these possessors are most eloquent in proclaiming themselves from housetops as greater patriots and nationalists than common people whom they exploit.

The export-import trade was insignificant in the pre-machine age compared to what it was in the century after the advent of the machine, and the latter was smaller than



what it is now when technology has made further advance. A country having comparatively less population as also better technology possesses an abundant amount of surplus value created by machine. It must export much and import little. If humanism and not nationalism were the criterion of division of the world's resources, there would be little of exportable surplus value; and the little exportable surplus would not have been a means of profit to the few exporters and importers. But as nations are inviolable units and big nations must remain big and small nations must remain small, retaining their positions of permanent extra gain and permanent extra loss respectively, the phenomenon of the abundant exportable surplus on the one hand and of the need to import on the other will persist. It cannot be solved even if the big country takes the surplus value of the machine from the hands of the few appropriators and passes it equitably to its entire population; that is, it cannot be solved even if the big country goes communist. In that case, the surplus value will no doubt be evenly distributed in the country, but the effect of the accident of history will remain—the big country will still remain in possession of the disproportionate share handed down to it by the accident of history. As far as small nations of the adverse disproportionate share are concerned, they will not get their due by a rational distribution of the surplus among the people of the big country.

The relationship between rich nations and poor nations is the same as that between the rich and the poor of a country. Whatever the institutional change in the political life and whatever the technological change in the economic life, the rich manage to retain their domination over the poor. Rich nations behave similarly. With their superior economic power, they become lenders and make poor nations their debtors; with this power augmented by the superior fighting power, they virtually acquire dictatorial position. With their productive and destructive machines, they establish superiority of their resources over the numerical superiority of man power of poor countries. A country which possesses unusually rich resources, and in which surplus value of the machine belongs to capitalists can maintain maximum employment only by exports, and is likely to develop political influence in the importing countries if only to maintain the quantum of its exports. This political influence need not necessarily be in the form of physical imperial possession. It can be exercised under



the shadow of the so-called democracy. In the first instance the rich manage to appropriate democracy, and in the second, the big exporting country's political influence behind which the purse as motive power is always present, will help the rich in the event of the poor multitude ever threatening their superiority in elections.

This analysis divides the definition of democracy into two distinct contradictory parts. To the rich minority, the fundamental right permitting unlimited property is the main pillar of democracy; remove it and democracy will collapse. To the poor multitude, this right negatives all other attributes of democracy, which are really paper flowers presented as genuine ones. The foundation of this pillar, as we have seen in previous pages, is money; as political power, the function of money is the same in international affairs as in national affairs. As it can set one group of people against another and as it can buy influence within the country, so it can set one (poor) nation against another, and it can create dissensions among the people of a country in order to retain its masters' political influence and thereby their export trade.

From the functioning and effect of this fundamental right the suggestion that arises spontaneously is that as long as it lasts, the old manner of surplus value and the abundant surplus value of the machine will continue to be exploited by parasites. In the hands of the rich of a poor country, it is a single-edged weapon with which they exploit the poor of their own country alone; in the hands of a country of disproportionate rich resources, it is a double-edged weapon, with which the rich not only exploit the poor of their own country but the poor of poor countries also.

We have seen that the effect of surplus value of the machine does not remain confined to the region in which the machine was born, much less to the man who invented it. As soon as an abstruse idea appears in the physical form of a machine, it ceases to be the possession of the conceiver, and cannot ordinarily be kept confined to the borders of the country of invention. When the textile machinery, for example, first appeared, the appropriators of its surplus value exported only its products, but it was not long before they had to export machines also, and enterprising countries copied them and made their own machines. That inventions spread despite efforts to withhold them is an obvious fact and need not be dilated upon. They may take time but they do spread. Therefore no philosophical discourse is necessary to bring home



to the inventors and the people of the inventing country that inventions belong to the whole world and must be shared with the rest of the human race. If inventions do not remain the property of inventors, why should proprietary rights be created by those who had had nothing to do with those inventions. Their role is like a man who appropriates a fruit tree which was planted, protected and nurtured by another man for the community. They appropriated inventions and prevented their equitable utilisation in the same way as they appropriated the gifts of nature disproportionately and prevented their equitable utilisation. It is a wrong which has persisted for thousands of years; it is a disease whose germs have infected inventions. Since the inventions of the machine age came in the form of man's physical power, vitality and blood, the germs got unprecedentedly rich food, and paralysed the economic body of society.

Science and technology came to the world with a message; they told the human race; "we come to relieve you of much of the physical exertion you have for ages been devoting to your work. Use us, and your life will become easy; you will be able to live more comfortably. We give you a new way of exploiting nature's gifts." If we go back to the earliest age, we shall find that nature also gave a message; "Here I give you plenty of things. These belong to you all as to other forms of my creation. If you will share them equitably, you will be happy. If you will mix your physical exertion with the gifts I give you, you will be happier." Some men, a small minority, flouted the advice, and lived on others' physical exertion. Accustomed to living as parasites, they also appropriated the power given by science and technology. The overwhelming majority tolerated the misappropriation as they had done in the past. But while the old way endured because the parasites only enjoyed part of others' physical exertion, the new way cannot because science and technology go on proclaiming, 'we have done away with much of the need for physical exertion', and if physical exertion does not diminish correspondingly everywhere or does not bring in additional commodities and comforts, there is bound to be a clamorous reaction.



## Chapter XVI

### NATIONS AND NATIONAL RESOURCES

Science and technology have, in fact exposed more vividly the hollowness and selfishness of national borders as constituting inviolable walls within which is locked property of a community of human beings. If the mechanical devices of one country affect the economic life of another country or other countries and if nuclear weapons of one country threaten the life of the people of other countries, these cannot be left alone as the exclusive concern of that country. Similarly, if a country possesses disproportionate amount of resources, while others live a precarious life, it cannot be left alone to flourish on the spurious definition of democracy.

There is practically no difference between production devices and weapons of the machine age if they are employed against a country that does not possess them or is just beginning to possess them. The gun, when it first appeared and was used against those who did not possess it, was looked upon by the victims as a mysterious power; they felt that as they could not fight the lightening falling upon them from the sky, they could not fight this weapon also. And the arrogant possessor of the gun was diabolically happy that singly he could terrorise many ignorant people; he would aim his unloaded gun at a crowd and put them to flight. With this 'miracle', European settlers in Africa frightened in the early days of colonisation people of Africa and exploited their resources and physical power. Having subordinated them with the gun, they found it easy to exploit them with their production devices. They called this operation of gun and production machine as their civilizing activity. It was indeed so seemingly as it fitted in very well with the prevalent notion about civilization. Men and women covering their loins with animal skins and children going naked were now provided with loin cloth manufactured in the exploiters' homelands; and the coming of cloth, and that too finely spun and woven by machine and not by hand, as substitute for skins, was indeed a self-evident sign of civilization. The terror-stricken men who were forced to labour for the settlers now became willing tools of exploitation. The settlers had



neither invented the gun nor the machine, nor had they been asked by the inventors to employ the inventions in this manner. The settlers, adventures among their people, if they were driven by economic necessity, had, it might be argued according to the logic being discussed here, a right to move to regions that had plenty of unexploited resources; but according to the logic of nationalism and according to the definition of nation, they were invaders. As their own logic and definition was imbibed by the exploited, they began to be looked upon as foreign invaders and to be told that they had no business to stay as masters in others' countries. They did not realize, when they were using their gun and machine against the local people, that the gun would one day cease to be a miracle and that the machine would also cease to be an exclusive possession. Verily a time came when the gun even to an African was just a weapon of destruction as it was to a European, and the machine was a thing that could not be claimed an exclusive possession by the settlers or their countries.

All exploiters suffer from a superiority complex, whose extent depends upon circumstances and conditions of the situation in which it is exercised. The settlers carried with them not only this complex but also the definition of nationalism and democracy they had imbibed in their countries. If under this democracy and nationalism, men were free to exploit their own countrymen, they were free to exploit men of other countries; and if under this democracy, there could be distinction between men and men in their own country, there could be more of it in other countries. They set up this variety of democratic institutions in Africa, excluding the local people from them. And the Africans imbibed the same pattern; they contended that the African countries belonged to Africans, and from their democracies, non-Africans should be excluded. The settlers first believed that like the gun and machine, democracy was their exclusive possession; but when like the gun and machine, democracy too was claimed by the exploited people, they grew peevish, and instead of listening to reason, and instead of turning their minds to redefining democracy, they thought of maintaining the haggard definition by a superior organisation of force. They created their own nationalism in countries where, according to their own definition, nationalism of different peoples should exist. The countries did not belong to them, according to the principle on which the world was divided into different countries; the properties



that belonged to them there had been built up with the resources of those countries and with the labour of the people of those countries; in colour and language, there was no affinity between them and the local people; and yet they settled there in the name of nationalism and democracy.

As different forms of animism are fading away before the light of reason, so the miracle of the gun and machine are disappearing, and its result, the overlordship of the settlers, is being liquidated. But since the defiled definition of democracy persists, the machine, both productive and destructive, is passing into the hands of local exploiters. What, therefore, the settlers carried to the exploited countries, as a thing of posterity, was the appropriation of surplus value of the machine by the few. The machine did not remain the settlers' or their country's exclusive possession, but under the peculiar definition of democracy—the fundamental right regarding property—became the possession of a small minority of the exploited country's own people, who can make common cause with similar minorities of other countries—even the very people against whom they rose in the name of democracy and nationalism.

If the settlers had carried the gun as man's protector from wild animals and the production machine as man's mighty helper and actually used them as such, and if they did not arrogate any superiority to themselves and worked like the local people, they would have met a cordial reception and become their kith and kin. But they were children of a tradition in which certain 'superior' men were appropriating every good thing that mankind was giving itself—old civilisation, new civilisation of the machine age, democracy and everything. They were germs of a vice, and they defiled everything they touched. Science and technology were bound to spread as they could not be kept locked up, but they were carried on the back of a diseased camel, with the result that they created problems for the human race. But a disease remains a mystery as long as its cause and cure are not known; what abuses have perverted the power of machine and what should be done to liberate it from the disease are now becoming known. For a long time, imperialism and colonialism screened from the exploited people's eyes the true nature of the perverted use of the machine, and diverted their attention towards freedom and democracy; they seemed to believe that the fight for freedom was



impliedly the fight against the perverted use of the machine. Under the impulse, and in the glamour, of nationalism, they did not realise that freedom was not mysticism, that its practical aim was economic, and that the nationalism that substituted one group of exploiters for another but retained the perverted use of the machine was really perverted nationalism. When reason will give their eyes new light, they will realise that science and technology, though they belong to the world and are not exclusive possessions of any particular nations, are exploited by small minorities in every country, and in this conspiracy the minorities of big countries get a big share; they will realise that national barriers do not prevent minorities of big countries from exploiting majorities of small countries with the active help of the minorities of these small countries; and they will realise that the capacity of science and technology to relieve men of physical exertion and give them additional comforts are not reflected in their life. These minorities of the world are a problem to the vast majorities. Since the minorities are united for the common purpose of exploitation, the majorities will, it might be suggested, have to unite to make a just and regulated use of science and technology.

But the suffering of the majorities in different countries is dissimilar, and because of the dissimilarities, to some the national borders are favourable in comparison with others. Therefore workers of the world cannot unite with their standards of living and their opportunities differing so considerably from country to country. A petty worker of a country of big resources and big exports enjoys a larger amount of comforts than a petty middleman of a country of poor resources and big population. To the worker of the latter country, the petty middleman lives a life of ease and comfort. If the disproportionate distribution of wealth of the world is conceded as the cause of economic ills of mankind, and if the peoples of the countries suffering from such distribution rise in protest, if not in revolt, against the usurpers, the unity one will witness will not be between the workers of the world but between the exploiters and workers of a country. The petty worker of a rich country of favourable disproportionate resources gets more and better food and clothes and has a sanitary and electric fitted accommodation, and enjoys better medical facilities than the worker of a poor country, who gets two coarse meals which do not provide enough nourishment to keep him fit for work for a reason-



able span of life; he cannot afford to buy enough clothes to dress himself like a civilized man, and he is fortunate if he has got a quilt for himself, his wife and children. And yet his living is envied by the unemployed, who would be happy if they could get the little he has. The unemployed of the world cannot unite, because in one country the unemployed gets some kind of allowance, but in the other, he starves if he is honest and does not steal.

The exploiters and the exploited constitute two distinct classes in every country, but when together they exploit another country, they become proportionate shares in the gains acquired at the cost of the poor of the other country. The poor of the exploiting country are poor in comparison with the rich of that country, but they are rich in comparison with the poor of the exploited country. That is the relationship between the workers of the two countries. The workers of one country are like the soldier of an invading army, who gain, in proportion to their ranks, from the booty the army acquires; and the workers of the other country are like the soldiers of the defending army, who will be affected by the results of the invasion in proportion to their economic position in their society. The 'soldiers' of the former differ from the big exploiters only to a degree. Even inside a country, all workers cannot unite on the basis of economic equality; their emoluments differ from factory to factory, from establishment to establishment, and the difference is not always the result of the difference between their respective skill and capacity; it arises from the paying capacity, that is the volume of profits a factory or establishment possesses. Whenever these workers of unequal status and interests meet they meet as unequals, fighting not for economic equality but for higher wages with inequality remaining intact. Such a unity is periodically demonstrated by workers of the world, giving a spurious impression that they are satisfied with the vast inequality between them and that all that they want is a little greater share from the profits of their exploiters.

The advanced countries, it can be contended, are great today not because of disproportionate resources but because of their early acquisition of the knowledge of science and technology. Britain, which was poor in food resources and raw material, can be cited as a seemingly cogent example. But would Britain, with her science and technology and without her empire, have been economically



better than a country of the East without science and technology and with her resources left to herself and not exploited by another country? Economic prosperity of Britain is the result of the wealth it acquired from the empire; her science and technology helped her to adopt a different mode of exploitation from that employed by the empires that preceded hers. The machine would have been an article of museum if it was not fed with raw materials imported from the empire and kept running by exports made to the empire. Britain also provided an example of how a country of inadequate resources but possessing machinery could make common cause with a country of favourable disproportionate resources. The United States, for example, supplied her with part of its abundant raw material. But it was not from the business deals between them that Britain grew rich; in fact, the United States added to British machinery's power of exploiting the empire. When the machinery was assured a permanent market and kept running, it maintained itself as a living organ (it was not consigned to the museum), and learning from experience, made improvements in its organism. A country that acquires disproportionate resources as Britain did and a country that possesses them within its own borders both use their advanced knowledge of science and technology for self-aggrandisement at the cost of other countries. And both disturb the economic equilibrium of those other countries.

The greatest disturbing factor that the combined product of science and technology—the machine—introduced into economy was unemployment; the term 'unemployment' in its virulent form was never known before. Its effect was first felt by the countries who were the first to give themselves the new device. As already stated, they found a solution by transferring part of the effect to other countries. And partly it was removed by new avenues of employment, all of which did not necessarily mean more production. The workers were putting in nearly as many hours of work as they did before the arrival of the machine, and the vast surplus value as represented by the difference between manual work and machine work came to their country from other countries. If other countries are not to be affected by the machine economy of a country, then it will have to increase the production of many items of luxury goods and make them as items of essential needs to the mass of the people. By this method, the manpower spared by the machine can be utilised in other pro-



fessions; but it presupposes a nearly self-sufficient economy which does not depend on imports. For Britain, for example, such an economy is an impossible proposition; it must import food, if not other things that have become part of its life. A country that does not depend for essential needs on imports, can go on adding luxury items to essential needs of the masses, and thereby ward off to a large extent the unemployment effect of the machine. The country which has done so most conspicuously is the United States. The country which aspires to do so is the Soviet Union.

The two countries have achieved the economic potential they possess through diametrically different methods, though the means is the same—the machine. In either case, luxuries have flown to the masses as the machine economy necessitated and facilitated new avenues of employment. In the United States, which possesses greater resources than the Soviet Union, the present standard of the masses has not diminished the capitalist class; on the contrary, this class has added to its wealth more enormously in proportion to the gain made by the workers. In the Soviet Union, the present standard has been achieved by the liquidation of the capitalist class. In the States, a worker enjoys better comforts despite the capitalist economy of his country than a worker of the Soviet Union; it is because of the former's richer resources. It is because of these resources that the capitalist class has outlived the raise in the workers' standard, and it is because of these that it releases a large stock for export. These exports present an economic phenomenon to the world: it is with these exports that the States is in a position to maintain its present level of employment, and this level it has been maintaining ever since it entered the world market as the largest exporter; it was with exports that is got over the threat of severe unemployment. If India, for example, did not import jeeps and other machinery worth thousands of millions of dollars, the States would have to that extent suffered from unemployment. India could have done so with full consciousness of her freedom and independence, but she did not do so, and added to her own unemployment.

In the so-called backward countries, the machine creates an inferiority complex; in fact that complex came from the first possessors of machines. The possessors dubbed the people of the backward countries as men of the primitive age: "They still use horses to ride on; they employ



human beings to dig and lift earth; they use bullock carts to carry their loads;' etc. It is like the condemnation of a peasant as an unsophisticated villager. The reproaches, as illustrated above, have a psychological effect on leaders of a backward country, and it is stimulated by the profit-making importers. This effect manifests itself in a plausible way: 'let us first import the things we do not have if only to pass as civilized people, and then let us import machines to manufacture them.' Not only reproaches and the psychology they produce but also political influences lead to this decision, which gives a programme of exports to the big exporting country: 'first export things and then, in the years to come, machines.' The exporting country gives a likable advice to a backward country: 'Your poverty is due to the lack of the machine in your midst; with the machine you can increase your production and exploit untapped resources.' The advice is taken and the country taking it cannot be dubbed as too credulous, because who can ignore the cold fact that it was through the power of the machine that the exporting country not only raised the standard of its people, but became a big exporter. As exporter, it holds out a promise of riches to its capitalist class and a better standard of living to workers. The promise is in the shape of the effect of a slogan and not the result of a plan based on a study of the economy as it would emerge from the execution of the advice—whether it will be possible to acquire and maintain the same level of employment as in the exporting country which is to be emulated, whether it will be possible to rise to a level of exports necessary to maintain full employment.

But these questions will be brushed aside by the obvious logic of the machine that it has come to relieve man of his physical exertion, and that it cannot be stopped but will have to be welcomed even as spade and sickle and the spinning wheel and the handloom were welcomed when they first appeared. But we are arguing here not against the machine as such, but against the way it functions in an exporting country and against the way a backward country proposes to use it. The advice for mechanisation is expedient rather than altruistic because it arises from the particular pattern of the exporting country's economy which maintains its employment potential with exports to a considerable extent. This pattern is not the right pattern to use the gift of science and technology, and as the importing country not only imports the machine but also this



pattern bodily, it also lays the foundation of an export economy. That backward countries are importing the pattern is evident from the slogans they are throwing out to their semi-starving and half-naked millions; the people are given plans of mechanised production in certain spheres of economy, but the plans avoid, perhaps deliberately, a picture of correlation between the targets and employment. The so-called planners cannot undo the inevitable result of mechanisation, which is that every industry that is mechanised will employ fewer men than it did when it employed primitive tools. They ignore the possibility of exports as basis of mechanised economy turning out a flop; the success is a chance, not a certainty. The United States is the most glaring example. The tremendous increase in the export potential of the States, after the second world war, was a chance provided by the Axis adventurers; the export of jeeps to India and other countries was a chance which would not have occurred if the importing countries had preferred using horses until slowly they were in a position to develop their own automobile industry; they may have decided to wait for decades.

India is the largest country of the so-called backward world and had been connected with the so-called advanced countries of the west for a long time. Her economy as affected by the machine is the best example to show that the machine arrived in the backward countries not for the welfare of the people generally but as an exploiter. First the machine-made foreign manufacturers were thrust on her, and when the rich men who had been making fat profits from the import trade aspired for more profits, they imported machines with nationalism and patriotism on their lips. The machine made a place for itself by causing misery to the masses. When those thrown out of employment became paupers and were unable to buy an adequate amount of food, the country got a surplus amount of corn with which, it paid the machine bill. And since the machine could not and did not create more employment and more purchasing power, and since the machine owners' further aspirations for profits could not be fulfilled by home consumption of their products, they clamoured for exports, again in the name of nationalism and patriotism. They asserted that advanced nations of the west were making huge profits from exports and that the Indian nation should do likewise. In the backward unfree world, India was the first country to import machines and entertain the ambition to be an exporter of textile manufactures. The



ambition was, to some extent fulfilled, because there were yet many backward countries to import machine manufactures. But unlike the exporting countries gaining at the expense of India, she has not produced the same proportion of employment potentials; in fact she is at the early stages of the machine age in those countries where the effect of the machine was widespread unemployment. With their pattern of economy, she can reach their level of employment potential only by acquiring a proportionately larger market in countries that are still backward. Backwardness of some countries is thus the prerequisite for her machine economy in which a majority of the working population can secure employment and big parasites and their satellites can live according to their traditional standard of life.

Can India ever attain this cherished position? The answer may be searched for, perhaps in vain, in another question: Can other backward countries attain such a position? In every backward country of capitalist economy where the machine is being avidly invited, the motive is profit and not its rational utilisation for human well-being. Therefore every such country can fit it into the existing pattern of its economy only on the basis of exports. A backward country going in for the machine economy is bound to be modest in the beginning, and may only aspire to be self-sufficient. When the affluent or ignorant politicians and the rich minority of a backward country talk of self-sufficiency, they ignore, either deliberately or unconsciously, the negative content of this oft-repeated term. The negative content can best be shown with an illustration from Indian economy. When the textile manufactures thrust upon India by the foreign machine caused the abandonment of the spinning wheel and handloom, the quantity of imported cloth was regarded as the shortfall, and it was contended that this shortfall should be made up by importing machinery and manufacturing that amount of cloth in the country itself. It was conveniently ignored that what represented the shortfall was actually created by the foreign machine.

Let us look at another side of the negative content. India also imported what are regarded even now as luxury articles for a small minority of her population. The affluent or ignorant politicians and the rich minority clamoured for the attainment of self-sufficiency in these items of luxury also, and went in for machine plants. It was the self-sufficiency of the law of demand and supply, a law of the mischievous capitalist economy. This self-suffi-



ciency is the product of the relationship between the demand and the purchasing capacity; millions of people may go half-naked, but the country can be called self-sufficient in cloth. An increase over the demand is surplus, which can be exported. And since exports are necessary to create additional employment and consequently more purchasing power, the initial modesty (of self-sufficiency) is bound to be a transitional phase and should move on to the ambition for exports.

In this race for exports, the big exporting countries of today can hope for a long period of internal economic stability inasmuch as they can substitute machines for finished goods; and the importing countries can have the satisfaction that they are making a sound investment in machines. The big exporting countries can also hope that machine exports can go on endlessly because they will continue to enjoy the lead in new inventions and improvements in old ones. Not many years pass before an old machine is given a new shape by new improvements; sometimes the old is rendered wholly obsolete. With pride these countries can claim that the inventing mind resides within their borders. Whether the inventing mind remains their monopoly or not, exports will remain one of the main pillars of their economy as long as they do not move to another pattern. Exports as a means of sustaining internal economy are different from barter. The variety of soil and climate differing from region to region, one country can spare for another country a certain amount of things which that country does not produce; but this proposition can hardly serve the same purpose as exports as creator of employment at present do. Barter presupposes a self-dependent internal economy, and self-dependent internal economy presupposes a different economy, wholly different from the present. In such an economy, the machine will cease to be a cause of unemployment; in it the machine and the working population will be so correlated that all people will equitably enjoy the surplus value of the machine, that is, to the extent of that surplus value, the use of physical exertion will be reduced. Then self-sufficiency will assume its true meaning; it will then mean equitable distribution of the produce.

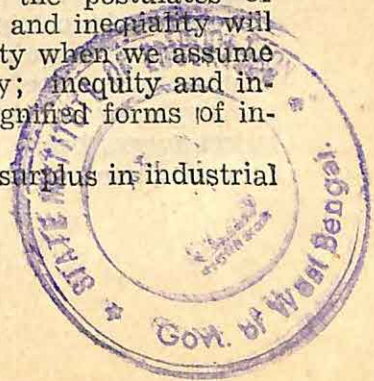
But even the self-dependent internal economy solves the problem only partly. The two kinds of countries provide the proof—those that are surplus and those that are deficit in essential needs of life. One can understand a country of surplus cloth giving its people more clothes than the ave-



rage of the world, but one cannot imagine a country of surplus wheat consuming its entire produce. If it were merely an agricultural country and not a country highly developed in science and technology also, it would have changed its surplus stock of wheat with machine manufactures of the other country. But if its machine economy is balanced by exports, it will need not only a foreign market for wheat but also for machine manufactures. Surplus land produce may be the result of different causes: (1) disproportionate (accidental) division of the earth into countries; (2) better productivity of soil; (3) application of science and technology to agriculture; (4) better methods of cultivation; (5) better irrigation facilities; (6) more suitable climate; (7) availability of the wherewithal in adequate quantity to get the maximum from the land; (8) conversion of experience, experiment and observation into lessons for quantitative and qualitative increase in production; (9) control over avoidable natural calamities; (10) protection of crops from animals and insects; (11) avoidance of waste with protective methods of preservation; (12) check over the natural rise in population by means of birth-control.

To sum up these causes, the surplus should arise either from (1) the possession by a country of disproportionate share of the earth's resources, or (2) proper utilisation of human ingenuity and effort, or (3) favourable elements; or from all these jointly. And from them is deduced the principle that (1) the earth should belong, as a single unit, to the entire humanity (we are not, taking other creatures into account here), and (2) science and technology should also belong to the entire humanity; this would include proper application of human effort. In actual practice, the earth, though divided into so many nations, has been made by exports and imports a single economic unit. Similarly, the gifts of science and technology, though largely in possession of countries where they were born and developed, are open for utilisation, and to a great extent, are actually utilised, by the entire world. But the economically united world is nationally divided; and consequently economic unity is based on the postulates of inequity and inequality. This inequity and inequality will seem convertible into equity and equality when we assume that it is so convertible inside a country; inequity and inequality in the world are only the magnified forms of inequity and inequality inside a country.

A country surplus in wheat and also surplus in industrial





products, can export the surplus to a country deficit in either and not in a position to have a barter arrangement, on either or both of the following conditions: (1) payment in gold; (2) credit. As the most precious metal, gold was recognised long ago as the material for highest coins in the world. Under the barter system, how was its exchange value determined? An earthen pot represented a fraction of a day's labour of a man, and must have been bartered for a quantity of wheat representing nearly that much labour. Gold, like iron, must have come to man after a good deal of search and labour; and an ounce of it represented as much labour as was spent on producing many pounds of wheat. Gold was not an essential need of life, and only those who had a surplus to spare went in for it; those who did not have a surplus may have, to emulate its users, cut short their needs in order to have a little quantity of it.

So, gold entered the barter market largely as a phenomenon of surplus. It was itself a result of labour, but it came as a challenger to the labour of the producers of essential commodities; the gold workers were fed and clothed and provided other things by those producers, but gold largely went to the possessors of surplus. The mischief was augmented by gold becoming the highest means of exchange. The mischief grew to monstrous proportions with the ascendancy of gold as the international means of exchange. It solved the carriage problem of thieves, robbers and invaders. Invaders carried camelloads, cartloads and shiploads of it to their country; with it they could buy anything from anywhere in the world. If their country was deficit in corn, they could render it surplus with gold booty.

For a long time, the English East India Company had an unfavourable trade balance with India, and paid gold for the difference. India was selling corn for gold; but gold was playing its usual mischievous role. The country had no surplus to spare, and artificial surplus came out of a system which impoverished millions of people and reduced their purchasing power; and gold that came from England did not go to those who spared the supply for exports by cutting their meals but went into the pockets of those who acquired the surplus by different manoeuvres. Then came a time when the English, getting conscious of the depletion of their gold stock, used their position as rulers to get back, by manoeuvres, as much of the gold they had sent as they possibly could. This was the time



when paper money had largely replaced coins in internal transactions of a country, and currency notes began to circulate in India also. A Government order could raise the stock of currency notes to a certain extent safely beyond the gold backing. The British Government in India did so, and by artificially raising gold prices in the internal market, it threw out an inducement to profit-makers to sell gold on profit. The currency notes they got represented the price they had paid for gold plus the difference, as profit, between the purchase price and sale price. To them the currency notes were as much money as the gold they disposed of and the profit they earned. They were right; the notes had the same purchasing capacity as gold. And how was this gold claimed by England? The goods India used to send to England were not paid by an equal amount of goods from that side; a large quantity of Indian exports represented payments made to the British Crown by the dependency and to civil servants and other contributions such as for an imperial war.

A narrative of the exploits of gold in the world will fill a volume; it is enough for our purpose here to say that gold has little right to represent commodities, much less the labour that has gone into the production of the commodities. Its possession by different countries is as much an accident of history as of the national boundary of a country. Even if it be assumed as the representative of a country's wealth, it cannot give a country of exportable surplus a cogent argument to claim gold payment from an importing country whose gold resources are bound to be depleted within a certain space of time if the two continue to be unequal exporters and importers respectively. A hungry man, who works the whole day and is prepared to work harder but does not possess enough gold to buy a requisite amount of corn and does not possess enough land because the land in his country is not enough for the entire population, cannot be told by a country which produces a surplus amount of corn because of its disproportionate possession of land and modern methods that he should either pay gold for food or go hungry. Such a demand arises out of gold's position as the international means of exchange, and the moment it is deposed from that position and regarded as a commodity coming out of the resources of the world which should belong to the entire humanity, and one might add, be distributed equitably and equally, it will cease to be the illicit power that it is at present. Gold, correlated as it has been through the ages with surplus value and not with labour, is a



thing of distinction. Whether as solid metal or in the form of manufactured commodities, it has been the possession of men of 'distinction'. Because of its short supply and superiority as a thing of utility, it cannot be equated with, for example, iron, which many more men can afford to buy. In what way can it be distributed equally and equitably is a question for consideration. Much of it is not at present in use as a commodity and is possessed like currency notes; as a currency note is of no other utility than a legal tender so is solid gold, so in many cases are gold ornaments. Even governments, as representatives of their nations, stock it as money and not as a commodity. To them it is the means of international exchange; in any national emergency, they can use it as currency to buy things from other countries. Such is the power of gold that people's faith might be shaken in the paper currency, but it cannot be shaken in the value of gold. Currency notes can be demonetised but not gold. Gold, as monopoly possession of men enjoying surplus, represents surplus value, and what should happen to all manifestations of surplus value both at national level and international level should happen to gold also. Rationalisation of gold presupposes rationalisation of labour and resources of the world.

Credit, the other basis of exports by a surplus to a deficit country, will automatically disappear after the rationalisation of the world's resources. As inside a country so in the world, credit is a symptom of disbalanced and irrational economy. It is a sign of individualistic and not corporate approach to life; it makes society look as a crowd of self-seeking individuals, each behaving as a self-aggrandising creature. Let us pick up an example of credit from the earliest period of a community as an economic unit. The crop of a man was, despite all possible care, destroyed by wild animals, and when he was faced with starvation, he approached a fellow cultivator who had a surplus. The man of surplus consented to oblige him provided he returned the loan with an extra amount. The man in distress agreed, which meant that for several seasons, he would have to tighten his belt. The man of surplus was confident that unlike the fellow indebted to him, he would never need such an obligation and therefore chose what might be called an unsocial behaviour, which became the established practice of society. His surplus was the result of surplus resources in his possession, which he could utilise in providing himself with comforts of distinction or



convert into gold or lend on interest to add to his surplus power. Thus, men of surplus became lenders and men of deficit borrowers. This is not only the internal phenomenon of a country, but a world phenomenon if we look at it by ignoring the artificial national barriers; it is not actually one country that lends to another; the lenders and gainers actually are men of surplus, and they lend to every needy whether within or outside the national borders, provided they are assured of the principal returning with interest in any form of wealth.

There are countries that will remain deficit in food even after they have made the best use of science, technology and human effort. Such countries can be roughly divided into two classes: (1) those that are making the best use of science, technology and human effort in agriculture and industry; (2) those that are still struggling to do so. Britain may be cited as an example of the former, and India of the latter. Countries like Britain will always remain deficit in food, and are a powerful example to support international trade; their food imports will be possible only if they produce certain things for export. But there is no international arrangement guaranteeing exports, and they employ all manner of manoeuvres and devices to retain their means of getting their food supply. Britain's exports themselves depend on imports (raw materials), and to maintain them she must have a regular supply of raw materials. And the supply will be regular in the requisite quantity only as long as the countries supplying raw materials do not themselves take to converting their produce into finished goods or have surplus resources. By continuing to be a better user of science and technology and by political manoeuvres, Britain, despite her permanent deficits, may continue to be a country of surplus, but for a rational assessment of the resources of the world, she will be reckoned as a deficit country. If a time comes—it may be distant but is not unlikely—when her exports diminish and consequently threaten diminution of the vital imports, she will have to choose one of the two solutions: (1) to become an advocate of rational distribution of resources of the world; (2) to think of an empire again. If her population goes up, her problem will be acuter to that extent.

India, unlike Britain, hopes she can acquire self-sufficiency in food if she can apply a restraint on her rising population. But in her case the assumption of food self-sufficiency is not necessarily an assumption of possession



of proportionate resources: she may be able to give her people enough of corn, and may not be able to give other things considered as essential items of human needs, even cloth. Disproportionate rise in the population of many countries may be used as an argument against the grievance of disproportionate distribution of the world's resources, but the disproportion will remain even after giving allowance to this factor. The argument gives rise to two questions: (1) should those countries that have tolerated the rise in populations unmindful of their resources be penalised by semi-starvation? (2) should there be a world order in which the entire humanity be treated as a single economic unit, an order controlling all human affairs including the population problem? Nobody, not even an ardent nationalist, has ever suggested the penalty of semi-starvation; on the contrary everybody who is somebody in world affairs has ardently suggested that something should be done to feed the world's hungry. Therefore the solution lies in the affirmative answer to the second question; it is a solution which can come up only by demolishing artificial barriers between surplus food and the hungry.

The people of the world, particularly those who have assumed leadership, will have to make rational decisions about the economic life of the world. They have to decide whether they really believe (1) in the tradition which has accorded superiority to man over animal, (1) in economic equality of all peoples of the earth. Taking advantage of his hands and superior brain, man appropriated to himself all resources of the earth, practically excluding other creatures from his consideration. From himself his consideration extended to the small community in which he lived as an economic unit, and from the small community his consideration extended to the entire human society. Whenever a man speaks with full consciousness of the tradition he says and proclaims loudly that a hungry man must be fed before a hungry animal is fed. This tradition is regarded as a rational approach, and any nation or any man who changes the order of preference is dubbed as committing a crime against humanity. But the profession and practice differ diametrically. In practice dogs are fed, and men are left hungry. Nay, dogs, particularly in England, which is deficit in food but thrives on imports from abroad, are fed with numerous kinds of delicious things; thousands of people are engaged in preparing the delicacies and making profits out of them. How will an Indian, for example, who will consider himself lucky if he gets two ade-



quate coarse meals every day, react to this flagrant violation of the tradition, to this cruel mockery of the profession? There are in the world hundreds of millions of men, women and children like this Indian. A country that throws to dogs the traditional consideration for humanity does so in the belief that it can retain its distinctive economic status by means of its superior fighting power, by turning science and technology to destructive use.

In a nutshell, the surplus nations argue: 'Our surplus is our own concern; whether we give it to cattle, pigs or dogs, or even throw it into the sea is our own concern. You, the hungry people of the world, can have it for gold or for things you produce and that are less vital to your needs than food; if you have to go half-naked and if you have to deny yourselves other essential things of life, it is not our concern.' And the deficit nations may argue: 'We have little gold to maintain a regular flow of food imports; and as far as other things are concerned, we are already leading a life much more deficient than that of yours. We, as human beings, have a greater claim on your food surplus than your animals and the sea'. According to the prevalent practice and democratic conventions, the surplus nations will reject the claim, the force behind the rejection being that of the destructive weapons given by science and technology.

Therefore, if the advocacy for a world order based on reason fails, the peoples of the deficit countries will have to hang down their heads in contemplation; they will have to think whether fighting is the only way left to re-establish reason; they will have to think how they could give themselves science and technology's destructive weapons to match with those possessed by the countries of surplus; they will have to think that science and technology which are a double-edged weapon, exploiting the backward nations economically and threatening them with destruction, could be blunted only by science and technology; they will have to think how to remove the dust of unreason from science and technology and give it a shape of reason.



## Chapter XVII

### ECONOMIC BIAS IN EDUCATION

The supposedly solid appearance of the world will look as trembling when put to a test of reasoning; what is spurious looks genuine only as long as its reality remains hidden. For the spurious to remain unquestioned, it is necessary to remain unexamined. To most men in the world, appearances are the reality because they have never cared to examine them, never cared even to apply their minds to the examination done by others.

Usually a child grows to manhood in the midst of beliefs and not in the midst of questions; to the few questions he asks, provoked by his inquisitiveness, the answers given are usually the established beliefs repeated, beliefs that are seldom based on the results of scientific inquiry. To the question, who has made the Sun, the Moon, the Earth, the answer given is, God. Where is God? The answer given is, in the Heaven, from where he controls affairs of the earth as of everything else created by Him. And who made God Himself? The answer given is. He is the self-created Lord. The inquisitiveness is thus sought to be satisfied by a mystical belief, which, though it should provoke more inquisitiveness, prevails, because it shuts up the lid of the sense of reason. And the child does not ask the father: 'Who told you that the Sun, the Moon and the Earth were made by God and that God is the self-created Lord?' The answer to this question, however, will be, the wise men of the world, all thinking alike. Did the wise men explain how did they formulate their answer; how did they know that there is God in Heaven? They did not; nobody asked them this question; everybody believed what they said. Why did everybody believe what they said without insisting on a convincing explanation? Because they were much wiser than common people, and common people could not always comprehend what the superior minds produced. And what was it that distinguished wise men from the mass of the people? The answer was, their superior brains, of which they had given ample proofs before; their advices, born of their superior brains, had solved intricate problems.

These questions and answers lead us to the conclusion that



the wise men's cleverness, from which came wordly advices, was a visible fact of life, which created a faith in their wisdom, and which emboldened them to present the incomprehensible as an indubitable fact. As the answers about the Sun, the Moon, the Earth, and God Himself were the product of the wise men's superior minds, but in fact betrayed the failure of human mind, those could be given in that form by any one. The creativeness of the answers was conceded to the wise men because of the wisdom they had displayed in worldly affairs. They might have suffered a little loss of their reputation as wise men if they said: 'The Sun, the Moon, the Earth are all beyond our frail minds to comprehend; they seem to have been created by some supernatural power. Human mind is unable to give an answer acceptable to reason; and the best thing for man is to close the curiosity by believing that there must be a creator of the universe. Let us call that creator God.' Such a statement would have been the truth; but the wise men presented their answers as a product of their wisdom, a product of their mental exercise and spiritual power.

The pretension of the superior mind to comprehend the incomprehensible led to the mixing up of the comprehensible and visible with the incomprehensible and invisible. It was the mixing up of mundane affairs with spiritual. Mind was credited with the power to know what it could not know. The superior mind abused the recognition of its superiority in mundane affairs, and by mixing up mundane and spiritual matters, misled the general mass of people. When a child saw another child of his age going in a motor car and asked his parents, how was it that he did not have a car, the answer they gave him was: men were created unequal by God; some were born with better luck. The question was temporal and the answer was spiritual. The parents did not produce the answer by exercising their minds; they passed on to the child what they had heard from their parents and their parents had passed on to them what they had learnt from their forbears and what the forbears had received from wise men. The cause of inequality and the distress arising out of it was thus shrouded in mystery; what was comprehensible was made incomprehensible and called by the mysterious name of luck. Luck made inequality an inscrutable phenomenon of nature, beyond the operation of reason; it was God's creation like the sun, the moon, the earth.

Ever since God was conceived as the maker of the uni-



verse, mischievous men have been shifting on to Him the burden of their evil deeds. Let us examine, as an example, the motor car which appeared to the questioning child as a symbol of inequality. In today's world of multifarious professions and devices, there are thousands of ways of making money and accumulating some surplus for a car. A flour merchant adulterates his product with the powder of mango kernel, and thereby gets rich quickly; he accumulates a large amount of money, and buys himself a car. If there is a law, prohibiting adulteration, he must do the deed carefully so that he should escape punishment; he should also be crafty and 'social' so that he might bribe the officials concerned. He commits another crime to conceal the initial one. He is not caught, and passes as an honest business man. This example cannot be dismissed as one of the exceptional cases of crime being passed as luck. The crime in this case is self-evident because its appearance is not deceptive. In what may be supposed as honest cases of car possession, the appearance will generally be deceptive inasmuch as the surplus that buys cars is made up of extra or extraordinary profits made from the mass of people. If luck gave men of surplus, cars and other things not in common use, and if luck was determined by God, then it was God who inspired the adulterant to cheat his fellow men, God's creation, and it was God who impelled other car possessors to harm their fellow beings by making extra profits from them.

A thief—thief in the eyes of the law—goes to a temple of God and offers a conditional prayer: 'if I escape, I shall offer you part of my booty.' He actually escapes, and keeps the promise he solemnly made in the temple; and the part he offers is appropriated by the priest. He escaped not because the God of the temple had blessed him, but by chance or because the administration was slack. But he develops a belief that God can save him from punishment, which means that if God wishes to favour a thief with luck, He will protect him from the clutches of the man-made law. The thief's belief in luck corresponds, happily for him, with the victim's belief: the victim attributes his loss to his ill luck. The relationship of luck and ill luck is that of action and reaction; there is bound to be ill luck where there is luck because the latter is the result of the former. A victim's first and spontaneous reaction to his loss is usually of ill luck. The thought of seeking police help ordinarily comes later. Luck is the product of belief, and the law of reason, and as belief catches hold of man's mind in his



childhood, it exercises a dominating influence over him, and subordinates reason. The remedy in reason may fail, but the remedy inherent in luck never fails: a victim approaches police asking them to search for the thief and recover his things; and he is disappointed when the police fails. Then, he surrenders to the inevitability of luck and gets the consolation which he failed to get by an appeal to reason. Often, where luck is more powerfully dominant, surrender to luck is preferred to an appeal to reason. In legalised robberies—extraordinary profits yielding surplus value—luck operates similarly. It has created a tradition of indifference. Whatever happens in this world, all that creates economic disturbance, was preordained by God; it cannot be questioned.

Man's ill luck actually resides in his belief in luck. By becoming a willing victim of the tradition of belief, he upsets the natural order of things. Reason is light and mysticism is darkness. According to the law of nature, darkness should disappear before light; but here light disappears before darkness. Anything by which light can be passed as darkness and darkness as light will be welcome to men who make gains from their fellow men by blinding them. Reason, it is right, may face nothing but darkness if it obstinately goes on looking for a convincing explanation about the Sun, the Moon, the Earth; but it will have no such difficulty if it moves on the lighted road, where things are comprehensible and provide convincing explanations. How a man has come in possession of a car is not the same question as how the sun was created. Only those who want the former question to be made as mystical as the latter will present the two as inseparable parts of the same phenomenon. Those who want to rescue reason from mysticism will like the sphere of the two to be completely separated—completely separate actually they are. But it is not an easy task. Reason was not placed in the shade of mysticism by the exploiters of the present age; they have inherited the tradition. They are, however, interested in maintaining the tradition, and it is part of their advertisement campaign to maintain it. There is no campaign from the other side, from the people affected by the reaction of luck. In fact, there is practically no resistance, and the belief remains nearly as firm as ever.

How do they maintain the tradition? A tradition of such beliefs as enjoy the sanction of religion or are part of religion is supposed to be binding on man. Beliefs came, as we have seen, as answers to curiosity, and have been



treated with sanctity. They were not knowledge, but were given and accepted as knowledge. Attaching sacrosanctity to knowledge is apparently unnecessary, but as belief was passed as knowledge, so such knowledge as was in the nature of revelation about God and matters connected with God was declared sacrosanct. All such beliefs were enshrined in a holy abode called religion—sacred beliefs must have a sacred abode. What beliefs belong to religion and what are outside its scope is a difficult problem to solve. A man named X has always entertained the belief that his friend Y is an honest man. This belief is the result of X's experience of Y's honest behaviour in the past. But when Y is once found behaving differently, X changes his opinion; his belief in him is shattered. This belief represented an amount of reason that was provided by experience, but the experience turned out to be an inadequate yardstick, and produced the knowledge that something more than a limited experience was necessary to form a belief that may not fail. In such cases, men abandon their first beliefs and move on to other beliefs.

But in the case of religious beliefs, abandonment is unthinkable; those beliefs are immutable. There was a man who had full faith in his family deity; the deity to him was the protector of his family. One day, his child, ostensibly quite healthy, was taken ill. The man prayed before the deity fully believing that the reward would be quick recovery of the child. But the child expired, and the man was completely upset. He lost faith in the deity, and threw out the little idol in the street. He behaved in the way X had done, but he was condemned and ridiculed by his neighbours, while X's change in his belief passed unnoticed. He was accused of sinning against religion and injuring the susceptibilities of all believers. He reasoned with the neighbours, and they said death was a predestined affair; it could not be prevented. He retorted: if death was predestined and could not be prevented, then deity could be of no help to him as everything was predestined; therefore he did a wise thing in throwing away the idol. They replied: the deity represented God and could not be insulted. This was a repetition of a belief and not a reasoned-out answer. The man's reason was defeated before the force of the belief.

Beliefs differ from religion to religion and between one body of faiths and another. The above anecdote cannot be dismissed as representing the beliefs of a particular religion or faith; it represents all beliefs, including those claim-



ing superiority over others. Most people in every country abide by the tradition of certain beliefs. To a detached observer, they constitute a crowd of creatures who are gifted with brains but have yet to make full use thereof. They are the phenomenon of inconsistent and irrational growth: they have discarded the system of living in primitive age and are availing themselves of the comforts created by science and technology, but they stick to old beliefs based on primitive man's credulity and wise men's exploitation of him. There is no riddle in the inconsistency. Today's living, which is different from that of the primitive age, has been brought about not by the general mass of the people of the world but by a very small minority of wise men. These wise men were different from the wise men of the old who gave beliefs. The former's gift came from their brains used with dialectical reason, and the latter's from the feigned association with the unknowable, and not from dialectical reason. In either case, the wise men were a small minority, and in both ages, most men were blind followers. The locomotive, for example, was invented and manufactured by a few men, but the billions of people, who benefit from it have no idea of its invention and manufacture. Similarly, the men who imagined the existence of God and extended the belief about God to economic inequality as a God-made phenomenon were few. The masses accepted their dictum as Reason and Truth. The wise men of the recent centuries substituted the locomotive for horse power or bullock carts because they brought to bear on their task the same rational brain which had produced carts and yoked to them horses or bullocks. But the dictum of the ancient wise men remained unchanged because it was not the product of their brains and could not be improved upon.

If the inventor said that the dialectical reason he had employed in designing the locomotive did not enable him to perceive reason in inequality being attributed to luck, he would be criticised, even condemned, as one dabbling in a sphere which did not belong to him. Luck (unlike God) is as much susceptible to dialectical reason as were the objects that yielded a substitute for horse power; but by successfully retaining it (luck) in the sphere of mysticism, the successors of the old wise men have kept it from the sphere of reason. Economic thinkers and other rational thinkers have now and then dialectically examined economic inequality and explained how it has been created by designing men. But their logic could not make itself heard. Why?



This question takes us into the region of education. All knowledge, whether it is of science, technology, economics, politics, mathematics, or a dozen other subjects, is education. If education is made part of the 'phenomenon' of inequality, it will be influenced, even vitiated, by it so that it may maintain itself without questioning by those adversely affected by it.

Knowledge is usually imparted through the written word. It can be imparted orally as well, but the oral word is a poor vehicle. An unlettered child learns his elementary lessons about his surroundings from his parents and others in whose contact he comes. He supplements these lessons by what he himself sees. The knowledge thus acquired includes the beliefs discussed above. Thus he enters school as a believer in luck which he sees reflected in his school mates, whose dress, stationery, whose superior or inferior demeanour fit him for the life of inequality and teach him, without any lessons, to treat inequality with equanimity. Equanimity of a poor father's child is not his indifference to the markedly visible superiority of a rich father's child; he is not indifferent but very much alive to the difference between him and the rich child, and nurtures, as he grows, a sense of his own inferiority and he also nurtures a sense of the other's superiority.

A child who enters school with an irrational belief and a complex of superiority or inferiority should be regarded as a challenge to education whose object is to enlighten him. The challenge should prompt an inquiry as to whether the system of education is consonant or discordant with the child's beliefs and complexes. If it is the former, it stands on the foundation of a dark belief and a humiliating complex because it places its lessons on the layer of beliefs and complexes deposited in the child's mind. If it is the latter, it will remove that layer first; it will remove everything that is likely to make him feel inferior to others. But where inequality in wealth and consequently in everything else is the basis of society, the system of education will have to be consonant with dark beliefs and humiliating complexes. There the purpose will be to fix these more firmly in children's minds, because education is for society and not society for education; and society will have a system that conforms to its economic structure. It will not be opposed by the majority, the victims of inequality because most people believe in luck. Education in a society of unequal economic structure, when it took its elementary shape



after the art of writing was invented, was financed by men of surplus, and therefore it concerned itself mainly with imparting religious instruction, which actually was a code of beliefs. It was later on enriched with subjects like history, geography, mathematics, philosophy, and further on with science, technology, economics, politics, etc. Formerly education laid emphasis on moral teachings, and later on, it additionally prepared children for different economic vocations. Understandably, all moral teachings were consistent with economic inequality, and all modern subjects prepared children for different places in the unequal economic structure.

The moral teaching was bound to be a farce, and it turned out to be so. It said men must be honest, and realizing that honesty was difficult to be practised in a society where inequality of material goods held out attractions and temptations, it prescribed contentment and declared envy as evil; in reality, it attempted to save inequality from being disturbed. But it failed. Yet the moral teaching was not abandoned, because its failure in practical life did not end inequality; on the contrary, while men went in for immoral ways unhesitatingly, they retained their belief in luck.

But inequality does not sustain itself wholly on blind beliefs; it invokes a self-evident proof. Men are not born equal, both physically and mentally. It was the inequality of brains that distinguished in the primitive age wise men from the rest; distinction between men and men has been too obvious to be dilated upon. Some children at school have better retentive memory, some grasp what is taught more quickly, some show remarkable aptitude for a subject promising to develop into pyrogidies, while some are dull, some give the impression of being idiots. One child grows into a great scientist, while another, despite all facilities being equal, grows to be hardly fit as the former's assistant. Therefore the belief grew that as inequalities between men and men were created by God, economic inequalities that followed suit were a manifestation of the same creation.

A child born with a better brain should, according to this argument, enjoy better economic life. But as this does not happen often, luck is placed over and above the superiority of brain, and dashes to the ground the argument that mental and physical inequalities are correlated with economic inequalities. It is possible for a scientist, for example, to earn more than his assistant does, but this



contrast pales into insignificance when the scientist is compared with the man, who was born with riches but with a worse brain than that of the scientist, and who employs the better brain. In fact, the introduction of economic distinction between the scientist and his assistant as recognition of superiority of one over the other is a shadow of the inequality as represented by the employer. The emoluments of the scientist were not determined by any scientific calculation of his abilities or his needs; they were determined by the economic law of demand and supply—assistants were available in a larger number than scientists. It often happens that when the supply of good brains for certain jobs exceeds the demand, the market rates of emoluments go down, again proving the fact that economic distinction is not the corollary of mental inequality, and that both superior brains and inferior brains are victims, though not equally, of the economic structure of inequality.

The inequality between the scientist (the superior brain) or any other whose market value places him in the same position and the employer (the inferior brain) diminishes in economic effect, to some extent, when the employer makes available to the employee some of the comforts that are denied to the multitude. But its emotional effect remains despite the additional consolation provided by political equality and despite the fact that the superior mind is attuned to the matter-of-fact economic inequality. This emotional effect is the chain reaction of envy as manifesting itself in different economic grades. A starving man envies one who has a few loaves of bread; a man having a few loaves but not having a lasting means of livelihood envies a man of assured means; a man of assured means envies one who possesses the means of buying better comforts. And, to return to the subject, the scientist envies his employer's 'luck' who, though mentally inferior, possesses the means to enjoy the pleasure of visiting foreign countries several times in a year. The scientist's emoluments might be much higher than can be justified by the general standard of living, but in the psychology of inequality, he compares himself to his economic superior and justifies the comparison by his own mental superiority. He does not agitate, nor do the multitude, because they have been accustomed to submitting to what they regard as inevitable. The envy they all harbour is applied against one another from grade to grade, and yet luck remains as the most powerful consoling force.



The prevalent system of education steers clear of problems that torture man's mind in practical life; it cleverly ignores scientific economic thinking. Parading itself as based on freedom of expression and all-embracing liberty, it does not prevent study of the scientific economic thought, but presents it in lurid light. Text books are loaded with comments deprecating that thought and rejecting it as conflicting with political liberty. Economics, philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology, as subjects, are all written with the basic admission of economic inequality. The approach, thus vitiated, makes wrong evaluation, and suggests remedies that generally fail. In a subjective work on philosophy, beliefs will be discussed in historical perspective as part of man's life for ages and will be allotted a higher place than reason, knowing that man is influenced more by emotions than by reason. To place emotions above reason, instead of finding out why man behaves foolishly, is to argue that it is natural for man to behave foolishly. A subjective study shudders to separate moral religion from dogmatic religion, and treats beliefs as part of religion, because the approach is based on human behaviour as moulded by beliefs, and not on as it can become if it is shifted from beliefs to reason, from emotion to sobriety, from attachment to detachment.

Similarly a subjective work on psychology ignores nonchalantly economic inequality which is the cause of the greatest disturbance to human mind and whose repercussions are terrible on social life. How a man's mind reacts to inequalities all around him is not its concern. A psychologist of a subjective bent of mind or deliberately deceiving himself moves on the surface and does not dig deep to get a right answer. Suppose, he endeavours to find out why a particular man resorted to a corrupt practice to give himself a car. He tries to peep into the man's mind, and finds out that the ambition to own a car was excited by the superior complex of his brother-in-law who had a car. Every man does and cannot adopt a supposedly legal device to rank with the superiority of a fellow being, and if the above man adopted a questionable device, it was because his mind was more susceptible to excitement. But the psychologist will give the verdict that the corrupt is an exceptional case and needs psychic treatment. The psychologist ignores the basic reaction of every sufferer of inequality to every gainer from it. If the envy and its consequent reaction to have the thing that excited envy by any hook or crook is not aroused in every sufferer, it is because his



instinct for self-respect or his natural behaviour is blinded by the illusion of inequality as a legal manifestation, as a tradition of thousands of years. His indifference is not natural but hammered into seeming naturalness. The corrupt is an exception because he behaves not 'naturally' but emotionally, and since the emotion is caused by an excitement, it becomes a case for treatment. A rational reaction would assert itself differently. The man would then argue with his brother-in-law that the car he possesses is an emblem of inequality and must have been acquired by some device. He would then give rise to a different approach to psychology, an approach which is ignored by tendentious psychologists because it does not fit in with their preconception.

And economics behaves, quite understandably, more mischievously than other subjects. It deals with the functioning of economic establishments of the existing economic system, and its thought content consists in suggesting how they should be conducted in the best possible way without disturbing the basis. Economists of one country must show resourcefulness of mind to suggest how they can exploit economy of another country; and economic planners of one industrial unit should be able to suggest how more profits can be earned; they must be prudent enough to play with the law of demand and supply, even notoriously. They must function within national barriers and conventions which place the interests of their nation over those of all others. To them, an equitable utilisation and distribution of the world's resources is communism, which cannot be encouraged because it does not agree with their economic structure. They will teach their children only the economics which presupposes economic inequality. Human miseries directly caused by economic inequality are outside the scope of economics as a subject.

The present form of economics imparts directive principles to subjects like sociology and anthropology. Therefore sociology does not go to the root of mass scale starvation caused by unequal distribution of resources and humiliation caused by social divisions based on inequality. And anthropology graphically narrates how a tribal people live locked in a certain forest area, but glosses over the point to which a study of them should lead: why do they remain exhibits of the primitive age? Are others responsible for their present state? Anthropologists might contend that their task ends with providing a description of the tribe; the rest is the concern of economists. And all that



economists are concerned with is whether the tribe can be fitted into the prevalent economic system in which the poor are exploited by the rich.

Scientific and technological inventions pose many problems for sociology and economics to take notice of, but these subjects deal with the appearances as presented by profit-makers. Sociology and economics do not examine the impact on society of the tremendous surplus value of the machine appropriated by a few people. On the contrary, they mislead the credulous backward nations by putting out meaningless slogans as economic dicta. Economics as refashioned by the machine age is a subject of the industrialised West, where the machine and nearly full employment co-exist paradoxically. From this, economists deduce the slogan that industrialisation is necessary for solving in backward countries the problem of unemployment; and the slogan is accepted as biblical truth. They prescribe 8-hour working day, which, if at all, is little less than the labour devoted by a working man before the machine came, and believe that full employment and the machine can co-exist in the East also as in the West! They discuss, no doubt, how the machine threw millions of people out of work in the East, but lose sight of this fact while proposing mechanisation of industry with the old amount of workload.

Their conception of demand and supply is the area of a frog in the well whose world is limited to the well; to them, demand is what the purchasing power makes it and supply is that amount which meets the demand of that purchasing power; if the two are not evenly matched, the equilibrium is disturbed. In order to maintain the equilibrium, the factories engaged in producing a certain kind of consumer goods produce as much as is warranted by the demand. In this economics of demand and supply luxury articles may be in greater demand because their buyers possess more purchasing power than the articles that can be regarded as essential for the masses whose purchasing power is limited. If purchasing power were not the criterion, economics would transcend the self-imposed limit and think of supply in terms of the resources of the world and of demand in terms of the population. Economics is not concerned with how the purchasing power comes and how many people are denied an adequate amount of it so that they cannot purchase an adequate amount of bare needs; it takes account of the phenomenon as it is, and treating it as natural, elaborates theories. Economics behaves large-



ly as accountancy; in its logical view, a factory preparing delicate biscuits for dogs adds to the employment potential to the extent of the man power it employs; it does not care to find out the repercussions of this factory on the economic life of people other than those who possess the purchasing power to purchase biscuits for their dogs. Economics, in short, takes for granted that the machine is a profit-making instrument, and economic life as shaped by this instrument is its sole concern.

History, which claims to be an objective record of facts, surcharges its narrative with certain basic beliefs. History receives from practical politics conquests as a matter of course and treats them as rightful possessions when they become in course of time part of the country. It discusses all right the wars that led to those conquests, but does not question them and does not examine what lasting economic effect they had left. Often great warriors, the monstrous killers, are held aloft as great heroes, as if the battles were a cricket match. The warlords of every offensive war are prompted by the ambition for material gains and get them if they win; this ambition is not at all different from the one a robber has when he kills his victim. The robber does not form part of history because his deed is too small to be taken notice of, while the invader does because his deed accounts for a large number of deaths. A big thing, no doubt, makes a small thing look insignificant, but history succumbs to beliefs when it hails a mass murderer or looks at him with equanimity, and does not subject him to the same inquiry as follows the deed of an individual murderer. The aesthetic sense of writers and students of history will be injured if they are told that the great heroes of history they adore were actually great killers, because they (writers) have inherited from the tradition a different criterion. Empire-builders are assigned a place of honour in history; the mean tricks they employed and the killing they did, though made a mention of, are taken as foundation stones of the edifice of conquest, a great event. Every page of history provides the proof that its basic approach is the belief, never subjected to criticism by reason, that rulers including invaders belong to a different category of men, different from common people, and must therefore be treated differently. This approach hails Alexander, for example, as Alexander the Great; the epithet of glorification is based on the vast conquest he made, and conveniently ignores the killing, the ruin, he did. Their reason being blinded



by tradition, historians concern themselves with the killer, and not with the killed, because what actually mattered was the king, the killer, and not the multitude.

If history did not look at conquests and killings agreeably and extended its research to collecting and describing elaborate details of their effect on the general mass of people, they would have rendered a service to humanity. If they did so, they would have got harrowing accounts. If they told the crippled and the maimed that it was utter selfishness of war lords to say that death or injury on the battlefield ensured heaven, then the sufferers would narrate their true feelings; taking their last breath in ditches or in bushes, and left there unattended to die, they would realise and say that they allowed themselves to be reduced to that state because fighting came to them as a means of livelihood and that they fought so that their employers might accomplish their selfish ends. If history writers met the widows and orphans of the killed, they would have an idea of their feelings of agony caused by the departure of their dear ones and consequent privations. But the true state of things is deliberately given a deceptive appearance. By means of tradition-honoured tuitioning, a wholly different expression is extorted; the victims are made to say, 'we are proud of our departed dear one, who has laid down his life for a noble cause'. An invader makes a conquest and makes himself ruler of a bigger territory, but the survivors of the soldiers killed fighting for him, congratulate themselves that their dear ones died for a noble cause! By their perverted approach, historians have augmented and not mitigated chances of wars; where killing is ennobling and looting opens the gateway to heaven, ambitious rulers will be impelled to the deed. To British history, Clive was a great hero because he laid the foundation of what grew into a big empire; others emulated him to earn the same honour. And British soldiers who laid down their lives in building and maintaining the empire were great patriots. Hitler emulated this heroism and patriotism, throwing into fire thousands of men and claiming, like his British counterparts, that he was engaged in a noble task. In this case too heroism and patriotism were the history's lid for ghastly deeds. If history did not honour him, it was because he failed and was not crowned with conquest, it is the conquest which history recognises with applause.

History narrates with approval what is condemnable. A king, who adopts measures to bring wealth from other



countries primarily for himself and partly for his subjects, is hailed as a great king. If a king builds magnificent palaces and mausoleums making use of all the art available in his realm, he is applauded as a king of fine tastes. Take for example the Taj Mahal of Agra, claimed as a Wonder of the world. It was built by the Mughal Emperor, Shah Jahan, on the grave of the most beloved of his wives, Mumtaz Mahal, as a memorial of conjugal attachment. It is the biggest marble structure of the world, and is a brilliant production of architecture. Its cost was equal to the labour of about five million people; and apart from the cost, one may ask whether for the huge amount of splendid white marble (as much as would raise a hill) made available to the emperor a mausoleum was the best utility. Thousands of labourers who worked on the structure got just two coarse meals and yet they were happy because these were assured as long as the work was in progress. A system in which tens of thousands of men, women and children, living a wretched life despite good natural resources; can be secured for a pittance to work on a project of no social or economic utility, is an index of its hollowness as an economic arrangement. The Taj is the most glaring example of the abuse of white marble; it is, if one may say so, a structure of human bones because on it has been wasted a tremendous amount of human energy. The human factor is of practically no concern to history; it is overwhelmed by the grand structure and records it as a great addition to emblems of human civilization. This civilization resided in palaces or in graves, and not in the people of whom at least 90 per cent lived the primitive life in huts of thatch and leaves, and went half-naked. As if to confirm history's natural indifference to the contrast, historians, while acclaiming Shah Jahan as a great builder, lament that Aurangzeb did not maintain the tradition and was hostile to architecture. They are accustomed to be deceived by appearances and therefore do not go into realities; even in the age of science, where reason is demolishing traditional beliefs, history sticks to the traditional approach, because it must ignore all that is likely to question manifestations of inequalities. Once the approach is changed, a grand structure will reflect itself in the mirror of mind as a pitiable specimen of human exploitation. The mass-scale deception thrown by history all around overshadows truth, and even those, particularly politicians, who think of the Taj as the most foolish exposition of human exploitation and abuse of human art



and economic resources, do not express their convictions publicly.

This small volume cannot bear an exhaustive treatment of how the traditional approach—it may or may not be tendentious—vitiates the treatment of different subjects taught in educational institutions; the passing reference made is intended to give an inkling of how the prevalent system of education makes young minds receptive to economic inequality. Consciously, education is made part of the system sustaining inequalities. Education divides those receiving it into different economic grades, which in their turn, determine social gradation. Education has always been—since history began recording affairs of human society—a distinguishing element in economic and social life. When it concerned itself largely with inculcating religious or the so-called moral instructions, it created a class of preceptors for the masses left uneducated. That class arrogated to itself, with the support of ruling chiefs, a position of superiority in which physical exertion was tabooed; it was entitled to live on others' labour, and live lavishly. When its utility grew in temporal sense, it produced clerks and officers for the administration, who, because of their association with the symbol of authority and because of their birth in families of favourable inequality, were paid much better than the real producers of wealth. A clerk, who merely noted whether cultivators had paid the land revenue to the king or not, was treated as entitled to more money than the average income of a cultivator. Any cultivator, with a little training, could do the job, but it was the recognition of inequality which enabled particular classes to become clerks and officers. Further on, when education was closely correlated with some phases of economic life, the educated became a part of the economic life as it was, and the emoluments of an educated man were determined according to the value of his contribution to the economic unit of which he was a part.

In such a system, even if it does not prohibit study of rational economics, a teacher who gives vent to a different conviction, cannot fit in and will not be tolerated. Thus, in the first instance, it shuts out the rational approach; and in the second, it bangs the door of the growth of a conviction with the threat of shutting out the doors of livelihood. All people—there are exceptions of course—are conscious or unconscious slaves to the economics of inequalities. Or they are component parts of the economic machine of inequali-



ties. If some withdraw from it, they harm themselves and not the machine, and are faced with starvation. If a teacher insists on teaching according to his convictions which question the economics of inequalities, he will cease to be a 'useful' part of the machine; his market value will go down, and he will have to step down for a different, perhaps lower, job, where his conscience will not be directly hit because he will not have to teach what he does not believe in.

Education consists of knowledge, and knowledge consists of (1) things given by nature; and (2) changes made in them by man; it is thus the product of the eye and mind. Beliefs, whether religious or others, that are not the product of either the eye or the mind, cannot be regarded as part of knowledge. The prevalent system of education, whether it includes unbelievable beliefs of religion or not, bows before them and impliedly accepts them as knowledge. Teachers, therefore, must be conformists and not deviationists. Since ignorance and conformism are twin sisters, ignorance is a bliss; it keeps one from the miseries of deviationism. The best thing a deviationist can do in the circumstances is to pose as a conformist. This self-deception imparts one fitness for a place in the economic life. Most people are brought up and educated in the atmosphere of conformism, both religious and economic, and with the bliss of ignorance, acquire ability to earn for themselves and their dependents. Their knowledge and ignorance are the essential means for their livelihood. How to separate and remove ignorance from the clever mixture of knowledge and ignorance is a problem before mankind.

It is easy to tell the poor multitude that they are being exploited by the rich and that they should unite to undo the system of exploitation. But if the result aimed at were equally easy of achievement, the system would have ended long ago. Men to whom the advice is given were victims of certain beliefs before they became victims of exploiters. From morning to night, from day to day, from year to year, and from age to age, men have been accustomed to a certain routine of life. Here and there, crowds of people, moved by passion or impulse, departed for a while from the routine; they revolted against the authority, and either they got a better order as a result or were suppressed. In every case, their departure from the routine was of a short duration. In the routine, there has never been a provision to acquaint men with the actualities of econo-



mic, religious and social life, with the result that life is lived as it is, and ordinarily it does not occur to most men whether it suffers from inequity and unreason. What is called social and political order is, in practice, a device to maintain life as it is, a life of inequalities. Education, being part of this order, serves its purpose. A true system of education will acquaint children with inequities of the order and prepare them for a rational one. In the pre-school period, parents will then no longer pass on to the children the beliefs they have inherited and blindly accepted, but put the young minds on the track of reason. No longer will then a child go to school with a mind already made receptive to inequalities; no longer will he then condemn himself at a tender age to inferiority. But a state administration based on inequalities will never give its people that system. Such an administration divides the educated people into numerous grades, and everybody struggles to get more than what he possesses. An educational system which creates a lust for inequalities can never turn people towards the reason of equality.

Thus almost all people, educated and uneducated, continue to be willing tools of an irrational system; (unwillingness, if any, does not ordinarily express itself and will have to be regarded as willingness).



## Chapter XVIII

### VIOLENCE: ITS CAUSES

Most manifestations of inequalities owe their origin and continuance to violence. In primitive man, as in animals, violence was part of natural behaviour. But in using violence, man has been worse than animals. A lion does not kill a lion, nor does a dog a dog, nor do most other animals. Men not only have been killing men, but, again unlike animals, taking pleasure in the deed. The pleasure of this kind is either a reaction of pain, mental or physical, suffered earlier by the killer, or a reaction of environmental impact on his mind. In most cases, killing of men by men is to be traced to the lust for acquisition, a lust which is generally absent in animals who are always concerned with their immediate need to satisfy their hunger. When men too were at that level, they perhaps behaved similarly, and did not resort to killing; they may have been fighting and injuring each other just as animals did in order to drive away a rival from the source of food. Men, it seems, took to the business of killing creatures of their own species only after they proceeded towards the civilization whose first manifestation was private property; and they became different from and worse than animals. As larger acquisitions provided greater comforts and pleasure, men's habit to kill men got more incentive. There has thus been close relationship between acquisition and violence.

Whenever peace is preached and disarmament is suggested as the means, men think of a restricted connotation of violence—the use of force by men against men should be given up and disputes should be settled by reason. There is no implication in the suggestion that violence against animals should also stop. What men of the present age desire, to interpret it in the context of pre-civilization behaviour of man and animal, is that they reattain at least that level of behaviour which animals naturally observe. But the advocates of peace and disarmament do not look at the proposition in the context of unwritten human history; they do not connect acquisition with violence. Their urge to stop violence has come out of their desire to outlaw war, which means that they are for the present concerned with



international peace which is often broken by resort to arms. In the national sphere, peace is preached by the rulers as it has always been preached by their predecessors in the ages that have gone by. They all conceive of peace as the substitute for violence without disturbing the factor which prompted one man or a group of men to use fatal violence against another or others. They conceive of non-violence as reason, and believe they can place the superstructure of this reason on the foundation of unreason, the unreason being economic inequality born of the persisting habit of acquiring and maintaining possessions which reason does not support.

Some advocates of non-violence have suggested that in man's affairs peace has always reigned supreme, and that violence has been the exception while non-violence the rule. They contend that in international affairs, wars have not been a constant happenig of life; wars, whenever they occurred, were in the nature of rare breaches of peace. And in national affairs too, violent disturbances are very rare, and peace is the continuous fact of life. The fallacy of this argument will become evident by a peep into the organism that maintains peace. Peace, as existing inside a country or between countries, is not a manifestation of conversion of men's minds from violence to non-violence; it is the result of fear held out by the great force possessed by different countries. A poor man would not ordinarily attack a rich man, even if the former is starving and the latter has accumulated an abundant amount of food. He is not a convert to non-violence; his peaceful behaviour comes from his consciousness of the punishment that would follow the attack. The same fear prevents many poor joining hands to make violent attacks on the few rich. The former may be tolerating the rich under the influence of the tradition of luck; but they restrain themselves even when hunger shakes their belief in the tradition, because they are afraid of governmental violence. Similarly, at international level, a country of inferior force would always like to be peaceful with a country of superior force; and whenever there is a breach of peace, it is usually caused by the superior force.

In the suggestion that international wars should be outlawed, the impelling argument is that if law can maintain peace inside a country, it should, with the same pre-requisites, be able to maintain international peace. Citizens obey the law of their country either because they have faith in its necessity or are afraid of the force of arms behind



it. In a system where inequalities are permitted and protected by law, the faith is really a product of the tradition and obedience is exacted by force. Therefore the pre-requisite to ensuring peace by outlawing war is a world government which, if national and international inequalities are to be preserved, should have a force strong enough to put down disturbers of peace, not only those motivated by sinful intentions but also those stirred by virtuous urges. A world order of this kind will impart fresh legal validity to the results of earlier violence; it will validate the inequalities in the distribution of the earth's resources. History is uncontrovertible witness to the fact that inequalities at international level are the results of victories of superior violence over inferior violence. Violence has seldom vindicated right against might; when victorious, it has nearly always imposed its will upon the vanquished. Therefore it is suggested that violence could not bring about a just economic order. Great men like Buddha, Christ, Gandhi said violence should not be returned for violence; but they did not prescribe submission to the wrong done by the victorious violence. Of the three, Gandhi examined very elaborately the results of violence, in certain limited spheres of course, and suggested how they should be undone non-violently. Any world order that puts up its organizational structure on the wrongs of the past violence can never create faith in non-violence.

Violence resorted to with the studied object to gain something is different from violence resulting from provocation. History is again witness to the fact that the latter is a petty affair compared to the monstrous volume of the former. The gains aimed at were seldom those ensuring bare necessities of life to the invaders; they were motivated by the desire to get more comforts and more 'honour'. Even today, a rich nation, like a rich man, enjoys more comforts and more 'honour'; it claims these as its right. National honour is the enlarged form of individual honour. A landlord enjoyed a much greater respect and honour than a peasant did—in fact the peasant was a humble being; often the honour was exacted by humiliating him. The landlord maintained this position either with his own force of arms or with that of the state. Today, the extra 'honour' that an industrialist, for example, enjoys comes from the surplus value of the worker and the machine he appropriates, and is protected by the state's force of arms. A rich nation is in the same position. Violence can be resorted to by workers and weak nations in their respective



fields, and if it is not done, it is because of the understandable fear of superior violence suppressing inferior violence.

State violence owes its origin to the misbehaviour of the minority called criminals in legal language, and was extended to maintaining economic inequalities. If it be withdrawn, there will be, broadly speaking, two results; (1) criminals will still use violence and feel free to misbehave; (2) victims of economic inequalities will use violence to undo what has in the ages been protected by state violence. No state has ever succeeded in liquidating criminals; the sphere where its violence has been remarkably successful is that of law-abiding citizens, the victims of inequalities. One may even suggest that many criminals are the result of the vicious atmosphere created by inequalities, and infer that nearly wholly state violence exists for the protection of inequalities of the rich. State violence has thus an ignoble object; the present state structure can never lead to a society of non-violence.

The pacificism of protectionism is a state of the graveyard, in which the multitude is non-violent because its limbs, which should naturally be excited to violence by the evil done to it, had been lulled to inactivity either by the influence of the opium of tradition or by helplessness born of the superior organised violence on the side of the evil. In every country, governmental organization, equipped with arms and armies, is the mightiest organisation; it has existed from generation to generation and age to age. Even in the so-called democratic countries, it existed before democracy arrived and continued its role as protectionist. Arms and armies are everywhere justified as a defensive arrangement against possible attacks from outside; and as this possibility is a blatant historical fact, it serves as a cover to hide the terror the State's organised violence constantly holds out to the people. Usually, the armies are maintained for defence, and the police force deals with internal disturbances; but when police fail, troops are invariably called out.

There have been occasions in different countries when crowds incited against the injustice of inequalities grew violent and attacked the citadels of those responsible for inequalities. The attacks were not on the principle of social order but on the evil which enjoyed protection of state violence; but the Governments treated them as attacks on the authority and suppressed them, giving the conscientious attackers and their inactive followers the impression



that the Governments themselves were part of the evil. The attackers or their ring leaders were arrested and awarded by the judge death sentences or long prison terms. They were impelled by reason and righteousness, but the law, a manifestation of protectionism and not based on reason and economic justice, treated them as rebels—criminals—and condemned them. To them, the Government did not represent the rule of justice, but was an embodiment of brute force, a brute force that could not be challenged by a bigger force because the people could not organise a bigger force.

The organised state violence remains usually unchallenged because (1) beliefs and traditions have made most people indifferent to inequalities, (2) the educational system affirms these beliefs and traditions and does not permit anything likely to lead to effective attacks on them, (3) any other organization of violence than that of the state is prohibited by law, (4) most people prefer to succumb to discriminating inequalities to total loss of their livelihood and physical privations; who can assure them that the rising to which they are being invited will be successful?

For ages, victims of violence have been patiently submitting to it in helplessness. Violence first injures the victims and then subjugates them with the fear of its further action. Actual victims pass away, and their children and the children's children forget the injuries they suffered, but the fear remains because violence remains to hold it out. A government may not terrorise its subjects and may be behaving with the best possible nobility and civility, but these qualities do not precede but follow the submissive behaviour forced into the people by constant fear, and a time comes when unquestioning obedience to fear makes fear an unquestioned part of life; it remains but is not talked about. The ages that lie buried in history have thus emasculated manhood; and successive governments found it easy to rule over men made submissive to economic inequality. Men can be made conscious to thinking and realizing that unjust violence that has been systematically emasculating them can only be undone by greater violence. But the difficulty is how to do so. Can those desirous of spreading consciousness possess an educative machinery equal in organization and scope to that of the state's educational system? And can the people, made conscious, bring into being a greater organization of violence than the one in possession of the state?

The prerequisite is the sufferers' victory over fear. Fear



is as old as are creatures of the earth; it existed before the social life as organised into states appeared. A weak man surrendered without resistance the possession he acquired by his labour to a strong man because his consciousness of the attacker's superior strength advised his mind that resistance would not save his possession, and would additionally bring injury to his limbs. Man did not have to learn the power of violence; the consciousness was inherent in him. Since violence was part of nature and could not be warded off with reason, weak men thought they could multiply their strength by uniting themselves for a common purpose. But this device only increased occasions for the use of violence, because the combined violence of one group gave rise to the combined violence of another. Warring groups did not have any principles of economic ethics to fight for; even a defeated group would, if it made itself stronger, grow aggressive to make gains at the expense of its victims. Mutual fights made some rich and some poor—some possessing more resources than others. All groups, whether victors or vanquished, lived in fear of each other. The fear they manifested arose out of the first individual misbehaviour; if the misbehaving individuals did not forcibly deprive others of the food they gathered with their own exertion, there would have been no violence and no fear of violence between man and man. And if some men did not, later on, appropriate more of the available resources, there would have been little violence and little fear of violence subsequently. Violence thus owes its origin to economic injustice, and its growth to unjust economic gains. It was in this state of human progress that fearlessness and courage appeared; they were first used against unjust victors and then for making unjust economic gains also. In the first case, fearlessness was a virtue, in the second a vice; most men felt they should not surrender to fear.

But there was a drastic change in this attitude when the people were made subject to the authority of a ruler and there was a state. The authority did not remove the cause of mutual strife but recognised possessions, whatever their background, as sacrosanct; it thus deprived the vanquished of all chances to retrieve what they had lost: Its slogan was peace; peace of the future was presented in a virtuous form, which meant: let bygones be bygones. It was a peace which the sufferers would not have; and therefore the state gave itself a big organisation of violence and declared itself as the monopolist of organised violence.



By a single stroke, the state put to flight fearlessness and presented itself as fear personified. And as the authority of the state grew rich, richer than the rich whose possessions came from unjust acquisition, it associated with itself more closely the rich than the poor. The poor were undone; they were prevented from combining to undo the economic wrong; they were held down by the terror of state violence. Man is confronted today with his thousands of years old fear which is sustained by force in the disguise of law.

Let an example illustrate this point. A domestic servant is dismissed by his master for a petty omission. The master took the extreme step because he knew that he could pick up a better man from the ranks of the many unemployed. The dismissed man fails to get another job and is reduced to starvation. Quietly at night he jumps into the house of the erstwhile master and 'steals' the cooked food left in the kitchen. As he moves out, he notices a watch on a table. 'This watch', he tells himself, 'can get me some money to buy food for a few weeks, and he picks it up. The master, suspecting that the dismissed servant might have committed the theft, makes a report against him at the police station. The servant is arrested by a constable and beaten up. Usually, a man being beaten by another hits back; that is natural. But the servant did not; he was physically equal to the policeman, but he did not retaliate because he was conscious of the fact that the single policeman had behind him a mighty force of violence. Moreover, what he did, though out of sheer necessity, was a crime; and since the sense of tradition had ingrained in his mind the same definition of crime as the law laid down, he considered himself a criminal, and suffering from a sense of guilt and shame, he did not think to retaliate. He would not even justify his deed by saying that pangs of hunger drove him to commit the 'crime'. Reason is on his side, but he could not invoke it; the tradition having substituted the law for reason, he considered himself, as the policeman said, guilty. The law not only killed his natural impulse to return violence for violence, but also deprived him of the sense of the right of a primitive man who had unfettered access to food.

A state where inequalities are legally protected and whose government maintains itself largely with the funds supplied by the rich can never promote a conviction against violence. A conviction comes either from belief or reason.



However strong might be the belief about luck, it has not converted men to non-violence; as already stated, it is because of fear that they do not often resort to violence. Reason is not on the side of the present structure of the state but against it, and no government will dare to invoke it. Even if some of those who constitute the government of a country feel that the structure they are presiding over is irrational and unjust, they will have to think many time before they allow themselves to give vent to their feelings. Would they be left safe? Would not the rich combine to frustrate their plans by different devices? Would not the rich, possessing munition factories, organize violence to thwart the government intention to put them on par with the poor? Would not they invoke God to tell the credulous that the government was revolting against the God-made inequalities? Would not many of the common people, for whose sake the government contemplated an equitable change in the economy, be misled by propaganda in the name of God and attracted to the camp of the rich?

In different governments there have been people at different times who had absolutely no faith in blind beliefs passing as part of religion, but they would not reform the educational system; they knew well that the vast propaganda machinery in the hands of the rich would cast on them unwarranted aspersions and condemn them as irreligious and athiests. Such propaganda is always likely to incite people to violence and create disturbances. A government can put down people's violence with its superior violence, but few government members are ever prepared to be condemned as non-believers. Men holding or aspiring to hold ministerial posts seldom show that courage of conviction which is likely to estrange them to the people.

Press, in a democratic country, is a far more potential propaganda medium than the entire educational system. It is, in a way, a parallel army, and this army is in the possession of the rich. It attacks government as a right; it enjoys the right to carry on a vigorous propaganda against attempts to suppress the beliefs which create equanimity towards the rich. Without raising any weapon, this army, the Press, succeeds in doing what serves the purpose of the rich; but with a real army, the government cannot do what it may be persuaded to do by reason! The propaganda machinery of the capitalists occupies an honoured place, and often Government members seek its help. It is indeed a parallel government; but while violence in pos-



session of government lies dormant, with fear, in effect, substituting it, the army of the Press is very much active. Press lords might assert that the Press does not display the force inherent in it. The answer is, its fear is as much potential as that of the government force, and the government retires to the line of safety. A government, one can rightly claim, is not subservient to the Press; what is suggested in the above argument is that it shudders to take any step that aims at liquidating the injustice of inequalities.

Since the time when inequalities first appeared, those who created them have been defending them by means of violence, and deceiving themselves and others that the violence they possess is necessary against thieves. In their definition, thieves include those affected by the possessors' disproportionate possessions. In fact what might be conceded as thieves are a very small number compared to the vast multitude of honest workers suffering from the effect of inequalities. Thieves are not a caste; an honest worker who deviates from the norm laid down by the law defining thieves will be treated as a thief. Possessors are suspicious of the poor as a class; any of them may at any time be attracted to a thing providing richmen enjoyment or comfort, and may commit a petty theft. In most factories, watchmen keep a vigilant eye on workers. Every one of the large crowd of workers is a suspect in the eye of the watchmen whose approach is psychological. Temptation prompts men to crime, and if temptation is not suppressed by vigilance, there would be few workers who would not take advantage of the slackness of vigilance. Watchmen are the symbol of employers' violence which is either used by them on the spot or through the government agency concerned, when any worker is caught thieving. To a possessor, poor men around him are all thieves, and so that they may not harm him, he maintains a show of violence. Conversely, he alone is honest; and society accepts him as such because his riches preclude the necessity to satisfy temptations by thieving. The tradition of equanimity towards inequalities being in his favour, society does not pause to think, nor does he himself, that it is he from whom issue forth temptations for thieving and it is he who spread fear all around with his own and the state's violence. He is the cause of widespread demoralisation; he causes all poor—and they constitute the multitude—to be treated as liable to succumb to temptations. Take away his violence and deny him state protection, and



the cause of suspicion and demoralisation will disappear. In some countries state protection is not as effective as can inspire complete confidence in the possessor, and he makes his own arrangement for defence. All landlords and all other rich men used to do so in feudal age; the belief in luck had been their auxiliary force but they seldom depended on it wholly and defended their possessions with their own armed watchmen. They tolerated a weak king but would not tolerate one who thought of demolishing them as a class; they knew of course that there would be no such thought as the king himself was a big possessor.

Violence is justified by those who wield it as also by those supposed to be matter-of-fact men to keep in check the beast in man. It has been protecting possessions, and if possessions cease to exist as manifestations of inequality, it will be needed to prevent possessions being reacquired. This means that human nature cannot be trusted with upright behaviour. Whether and how violence can be removed from man's affairs is a difficult question to answer. The question that faces humanity at the present time is that violence is being abused and not properly used; and the abuse has assumed a form that makes realisation of proper use look the toughest job on the earth. The masses living under the yoke of the abuse are, in every country, like a defeated army, disarmed and bereft of resources to get arms. Even if they develop consciousness about the abuse, they cannot undo it; they cannot be sure of undoing it even if they raid and capture armouries and ammunition factories. The fear of failure is the answer to the question why such attempts have been few and far between in the history of thousands of years of inequalities. The element of doubt in the success of a revolt, which persists despite the multitude's momentary courage to die for a cause, is always a powerful ally of the possessors in the camp of their enemies. In effect, the abuse has been active and dominant, and the advocacy for proper use passive and submissive; abuse passes as order and the advocacy for proper use as incitement to anarchy. And since order must be maintained, violence in its present form is regarded as justified; fear of anarchy is the justification even for those suffering from the abuse of violence.

Violence derives its support from obvious facts of life. A father beats his son when he commits a wrong. This beating is not a well-judged punishment but the result of provocation caused to the father by the son's behaviour. But the same father would not resort to beating when the



son is a grown man even if he commits a much greater wrong. When the son was a child, the father was superior to him in physical strength; it was not this factor which encouraged him to beat, because he was not at all conscious of it, but it resided all right in his subconscious mind, which is proved by his different behaviour later on. When a master beats a servant, a grown man like himself, he is conscious that in all probability the servant will not retaliate fearing that retaliation might cost his job and he might have to starve. In either case, violence came from the feeling, conscious or subconscious, that the victim would not retaliate. At individual level, the use of violence yields different experiences. But whether it is the result of provocation or deliberate intention, it is generally resorted to with the consciousness of superiority in the user. A thief entering a house with a lethal weapon carries with him the consciousness that he has made himself superior in violence to his would-be victim. All governments have, in the examples like the above, the justification for possessing superior violence.

But there is a vital difference between the example of the father and a government, and for that matter between the violence exhibited by individuals and government. A strong individual has always confidently used his violence against a weak individual; this natural impulse manifests itself in the father also. But man has been struggling for ages to subordinate what he calls undesirable impulses to reason; this is a struggle against what he regards evil in nature. How a child should be brought up at home and school is now a science arising out of that struggle. The science teaches the father that the wrong done by a child should, instead of provoking him, pose a question; why has the child committed the wrong? The science has realised that an erring child can be reformed not by beating but by a peaceful method. Another branch of science deals with the reformation of thieves. Why does a man take to thieving? He has either developed a habit to live without work or an ambition to possess what he cannot acquire by what is called honest means of income. He can be habituated to work; whether he can be wholly withdrawn from temptations is doubtful. Notwithstanding the limitation of psychological treatment in a society of inequalities, it can be conceded that it can, to a great extent, reform the natural brute in man. But there can be no psychological treatment to make a government, legally preserving inequalities, and individual makers and enjoyers of inequalities,



abjure violence. They cannot exist without violence.

Nay, they throw out germs of violence all around. Take for example a child who steals a fountain pen from the bag of a class-mate, the son of a rich man, who had two. The father does not beat the erring child, learning from the lessons of psychological treatment, and endeavours to reform him. But the child, though he makes a promise not to steal in future, is not convinced why one child can have two pens, while another has none at all. He does not give up the habit, but hides it from his father and does the stealing more carefully so as not to be caught. It is the same temptation as the workers (discussed above) get from the employer himself. One should admire scientific research prescribing cures for individual violence as man's victory over nature, but how can one appreciate the cures being applied to a system where they can achieve little success, because the system nurtures the evil and renders remedies defunct.

As already discussed in this book, democracy is prevented by so many devices from giving people the rule of reason in economic sphere; and this truncated democracy is maintained with force. In certain new democratic countries where democracy had not yet taken roots and where the government's misbehaviour provoked army leaders against it, it was pulled down and replaced by dictatorship. Conscious sections of the people also had the same feeling as army leaders had, but they were helpless to assert themselves because they did not possess requisite violence; the army possessed all the violence of the state, and succeeded. Nowhere in the world an army dictatorship has abolished economic inequalities, and the impression it gave as it settled down to the business of government was that it was motivated more by ambition than by the intention to give a better administration. Violence is usually blind, and the same army which turned out the democratic government may have carried out the earlier government's orders to shoot and bombard crowds of people physically asserting the right to abolish inequalities. Nay, it would behave similarly on similar occasions. Those who possess state violence, from rulers down to petty army officers, are a row of economic grades, which are higher than the standard of living of the masses. Commodities and comforts that have been within the reach of the means given them by their grades are regarded by them as the minimum a man of their position should have; a demand, whose effect may be to slash those commodities and comforts will be dubbed



as unreasonable by them. Every government depends upon bureaucracy on the civil side and military officers on the side of army; like men of big 'fortunes' in public life, they would not brooke, in fact would not allow, any economic change that disturbs their standard of living. Whoever be the chosen rulers of a democratic country, they do not usually ignore wishes of bureaucracy and army in economic matters vitally affecting them. They, indeed, are the real custodians of state violence. In the name of law and order, they can go to any extent to crush movements for economic equality. If a good intentioned rebellious movement seizes arms and makes attacks on the seats of authority, the bureaucracy and army will not hesitate to suppress it by aerial bombardment. Behind the curtain of peace, there is everywhere the ferocious lion of violence ready to pounce upon reason if ever it asserts itself with the violence of the cow's horns. Men of violence have been very fond of comparing human bravery with that of the lion, because it suits them to do so. They like and have been enjoying the same law as the lion has in the jungle.

State violence being part of social organism has always been treated as part of human civilization. Let us have a glimpse of this form of civilization. In the beginning, sticks were men's arms. Then came bows and arrows. After a long time came the gun. And now we have nuclear weapons. As human civilization progresses, men have been giving themselves more powerful destructive weapons, and committing more violence. The bravery of the lion remains where it was when that animal first appeared on the earth; men have gone into a thicker jungle, but claim, quite shamefully, that they have substituted the rule of law for the law of jungle. When the law of jungle prevailed, the strong no doubt could behave as the lion did, but unlike the cow or the goat (the prey of the lion), even the weak men came together and combining their own physical strength and supplementing it with sticks or bows and arrows could assert their right against the strong. But now, under the present civilization, a minority's violence is so strong that the multitude is reduced to the position of the cow or the goat. It cannot reason even as the cow or the goat cannot with the lion and lives in a worse state than that of the law of jungle. To summon, for the sake of argument, other parts of the present civilization, will amount to covering an untruth with several irrelevant untruths. Under the rule of law, it might be argued, a man cannot ordinarily be deprived of his possessions and cannot



be disturbed in his settled life; all this is guaranteed to him by the government of civilized society. But we cannot compare him with what he was in primitive ages; all men then had the same advantages and disadvantages. The pertinent question is; are the weak as compared with the strong—those enjoying economic superiority under the protection of the sword—not more helpless today than they were in primitive ages? They are, quite definitely.

The rule of law does not help them to get economic justice. Suppose a worker goes to a court of law and complains that the principal man (calling himself proprietor) of the factory in which he works has wronged him by giving him only a small fraction of the produce (in terms of money) and appropriated the bulk himself and that by this act he has been deprived of rightful access to certain necessities of life. And the worker compares his present plight with the justice he enjoyed when in the days goneby, the present economic system did not exist. The question the judge will first of all put to the complainant will be: 'under what law are you seeking redress?' This will make the complainant speechless; there is no law prohibiting the injustice meted out to him by the principal man; on the contrary the law recognizes it. One may suggest that such a complaint has perhaps never been made to any court; and that it is unthinkable. This suggestion arises from the fact that sufferers are, in the first instance, aware of the law as affirmer of economic injustice, and, in the second, they have, during the long period that divides the days of justice of the barter system and the present age, become accustomed to the present concept of justice. And they know that if they use violence against the wrong-doers, they would be injured by the awful violence of the state. The law functions with the force of state violence, and is not independent to judge what in reality is justice and what is injustice. It will condemn as rebels those fighting with violence for economic justice and determine in what manner state violence should punish them. The judge cannot tell the state that the demand of the 'rebels' was subjected to judicial scrutiny and was found just. If a judge does so, he would be treated, again under the law, as an accomplice of the rebels, and state violence would award him punishment prescribed in the law.

State violence has been playing a mischievous role in economic life. When the mechanism of production was appropriated by a small minority and the multitude of manual workers were either made subservient to that mino-



rity or deprived of work and livelihood, they could not fight for justice because state violence was there to suppress them. The rulers were not stirred by the upheaval created in the economic life by the minority, but succumbed to it, giving the multitude the impression that government was not concerned with their welfare. Government presided, before the age of industrialism also, over inequalities, but there was no unemployment; it would not maintain even that status quo, and betrayed its partiality towards the minority, whose growing self-aggrandisement it protected with state violence. If reason and not exploiting violence were the basis of government, it would have declared that inventions considerably displacing human energy should belong to humanity and should not be used to disturbing the economic life. But government failed and exposed itself as part of exploitation of majority by minority. Ministers of a democratic government cannot get away with the excuse that they merely draw fixed salaries and allowances, and come out of government when their term is over. They go to government as obedient servants of the system which maintains injustice with violence; they go to perform a function limited and restrained by that system. Whatever their convictions, they bow before the system just as ministers in the autocratic rule bowed before kings. They virtually go to the seats of power as short-term kings, to maintain the tradition of injustice in the same way as kings had been doing.

If the form of use or abuse of violence as established by kings remains intact in a democratic set-up, one, not dazzled by democracy's shadowy glammers, will ask: has democracy changed the concept of justice? Has it reversed the role of violence as the enforcer of injustice against justice? Has it taught the ignorant mass of the people to realize that what passed as justice under kingship is really negation of justice? The answer, generally speaking, is NO. If democratic leaders contend that they must maintain the status quo as long as a majority of the voters do not give them a clear mandate to effect the change, they deceive the people as also themselves. The concept of democracy was not produced by the people; in their ignorance, they believed the kingship to be the only institution known to the world. From the time of the Greek city republics, democracy has been appropriated by a designing minority living on the toil of the minority; the minority adopts different devices at different times according to the exigencies of situations. And the people regard the subs-



titute as the best institution as they did the kingship. The saddle in which democratic leaders now sit is placed on the same horse of violence; the ignorance of the people is at the same level, and the new rulers carry on the business of government with the same advantage of ignorance.

Most people in every country are peace-loving and are satisfied if certain minimum things are assured them. There are countries where these are assured and there are countries where they are not assured. In the former, the satisfaction is the result of some kind of violence, imperial or otherwise; there democracy functions smoothly even though the rulers are maintaining the kingly concepts of justice and perpetuating injustice. There the ignorance is not irksome and state violence does not appear in its characteristic form of terror, because despite great inequalities, the economic condition of the masses is better than what it has been before the advent of democracy. In the latter, the dissatisfaction is the result of the former's satisfaction provided by violence, and there the ignorance is distressing and state violence is dreaded; there those artificial norms of 'civilisation' which keep men tied down to peace in the midst of inequalities are observed not willingly but under the fear of state violence. In both varieties of countries, violence largely sustains itself on the ignorance of the masses; but in one, a certain minimum satisfaction has given the toleration of violence a form of willingness, and in the other the toleration is the result of the consciousness of the terror of state violence.

What degree of civilisation human society has achieved should be judged largely by the degree of its achievement in abjuring violence, and not wholly by the comforts it has created by the application of its brain faculty to natural resources. In towns and villages of the so-called civilized society, men live with each other in peace; but some quarrel when they are provoked. Mind is provoked and as a result the entire physical form of the man is affected; the face betrays anger writ large all over, and the hands, even the feet, carry out the mind's order to strike. As soldiers carry out the orders of the commander or the king, so do the hands of the mind. The spontaneous reaction on the mind of the man injured by another is to return greater injury; the mind is first provoked and then acts revengefully. The volume of revenge spontaneously dictated by the mind of the injured is generally greater than the injury. But whether it is greater or equal, it causes a similar reaction in the opposite party, and his mind similarly



dictates still greater revenge, Men betray the same psychology as the beasts do. From the chain reaction of the first provocation, wise man got a thought: there would be no end of the reaction, and both aggression and reaction betrayed lack of reason. And they concluded that as hands and feet and other limbs were subordinate to the mind so the mind should be subordinate to the sense of reason. If the aggression had not been revenged upon, they argued, the sphere of unreason would not have been enlarged: if the injured was not excited by the natural reaction but had controlled it, the other side would have repented. And they—for example Buddha, Christ, Gandhi—prescribed: return good for evil; this they said was the best way to create in the aggressor a sense of repentance. These great men had absolutely no doubt as to the efficacy of the remedy they prescribed.

One may not question this prescription, but will have to take notice of the use of violence in the ages that have gone by since it was given: the provocation and reaction have remained as they were before. One will call the prescription a success when a strong man adopts it when hit by a weak man. When reverse is the case, and the weak does not react in the natural way, he will not be regarded, as a votary of the prescription but as a case of helplessness. Almost all people, as individuals, groups or nations, have been behaving in the natural way. To claim, on the basis of the fact of abundance of peace and rarity of provocation that human society has made considerable progress on the road to civilization, is to betray ignorance of the general behaviour of nature. All creatures, not only men, live in peace with their kinds; provocations and their reactions are rare. In primitive ages, men, like animals, were victims of provocation and reaction over food; when they evolved a system of acquiring food, the occasions for quarrels were reduced to the minimum. This peace was further insured by social organizations—one may call them political. In human progress, this was a period of peace with honour; subsequently, when the organizations were captured by certain men calling themselves kings and when parasites appeared and sustained themselves with force, the honour generally disappeared, and the peace also underwent a change of form; it began with owing its existence to fear and not to a just mutual arrangement. So it cannot be claimed as the result of the advice prescribed by the wise-men. Violence whose systematised use was thought of to avoid aggression, provocation and reaction now pro-



tecs systematic aggressors.

In other spheres than economic, even the state based on unreason and the wisemen not questioning the unreason have been interested in training men's minds, not according to the prescription (of Buddha, Christ or Gandhi) but differently; they would like to treat, or deal with, the aggressor rather than prepare the victim for sublime submission. The simple way, known to society, is to provide different punishments in the law code for different kinds of aggression, and punish the aggressor after a judicial examination has proved the guilt. In this method. the aggrieved is forced by law to suppress his natural reaction to the provocation; if he does not suppress it, he makes himself guilty like the aggressor. In the way advised by Buddha, Christ and Gandhi, the suppression would come voluntarily, if it can, from the trained mind, and not out of the fear of law. But the law justifies the alternative provided by it on the ground that society has not responded to the other way, perhaps finding it impossible. But a law is not immutable, and is usually an answer to the existing social need; it deals with the behaviour of the people as it is. It always envisages reforms and will assume a different form when a change warranting an amendment has taken place. It is the function of education to train the mind so that it may reason instead of acting on impulses. Education does not necessarily mean school education or written lessons. It is a way of living in the family and society, a way in which children naturally liable to quarrel over petty things, instinctively inherit a peaceful, reasonable behaviour. This way is an attempt to kill the demon of provocation at the source. There are children and men who do not respond to educational treatment, and since they do not, the supporters of this way can ask whether they would respond to the sublime submission as prescribed by the wise men. But it has considerable success to its credit, which is apparent from the difference between different sections of human society; some are impulsively provoked, while others exercise self-control.

But if victory over anger and violence in social life is desirable and if it is an essential ingredient of civilization, why is it that all countries of the world are not whole-heartedly adopting the way of education. and how is it that despite their belief in it, it is making little progress? Even in the so-called civilized countries, individuals often resort to violence over petty things. The answer is again traced



to inequalities, both between the people in a country and between different countries. They keep the necessity of violence alive, and like a corollary, of the unreason of passionate behaviour.

It is the passionate behaviour that the citizens of two countries at war are expected to show by their respective governments; the contrary behaviour will be construed as lack of patriotism. It is this behaviour that a man of wealth expects from his watchmen; and it is this behaviour which the exploited can adopt when they become conscious of their economic rights. In the first instance, a state based on economic unreason is not interested in the unqualified success of education aiming at the transformation of impulse into reason; and in the second, education cannot produce the desired results in the midst of circumstances not propitious to it. Therefore, in practice, while on the one hand peace is preached at home, in educational institutions and in public speeches, on the other, there is occasional stress on that variety of nationalism which should transcend all reason when citizens are to play their role in an offensive or defensive display of violence, or when inequalities are to be protected from an internal upsurge. It is despite this contradictory teaching that people live in peace; but inside them resides violence, which they display whenever they are urged forward in the name of nationalism or religion or by self-interest.

All reactions arising out of provocation thrive on ignorance; that connected with religion does so more. All religions prescribe peace, and almost all were involved in deeds that caused rivers of human blood to flow. One may argue that the soul of religion was pure and never permitted violence to be perpetrated in its name, and that it was men of evil souls who committed heinous crimes in the name of religion. But every evil has its roots somewhere; every religion has prescribed certain dogmas and claimed that they alone are true. They differ from one religion to another, and the followers of each, re-echoing the claim made in it, claim superiority for them over others. That was the truth according to them and since it was the truth, it must prevail; if others did not fall in line with it by persuasion, the sword should do the job. And the sword did the job. But all it gained was some more followers; it could not finish other religions than the one it represented. It was, in a way, the failure of violence. When violence was exhausted, religious tolerance was preached. It was not the light of reason but a state of frustration. The devil of



superiority complex remained, and would assert itself whenever its claim happened to be questioned by some followers of another religion. It could even be exploited by imperialists and other designing people. It has been done on numerous occasions. For example, in India, when she was under British rule, some officers played upon religious differences between Hindus and Muslims, and the result was numerous bloody riots.

India can again be cited as the latest example of religion providing an excuse to push forward economic ends. Many educated Muslims had not, in the beginning, reconciled themselves to British rule, and kept aloof from English education. Another reason why they lagged behind in English, the official language, was their worse economic condition compared to Hindus. Later on, when they found that their share in Government services was much less in proportion to their population, they claimed a proportionate share as Muslims. Why, as Muslim? The attitude is understandable. The predecessors of the British in the central government and in many local governments were Muslims, and their rule was looked upon by Muslims as the rule of a particular religious community. In certain respects, it indeed was; one of them was economic to a considerable extent—for example in services Muslims predominated. This predominance lay preserved in the minds of certain Muslims when they demanded from the British their share in services and political institutions as Muslims. The British too recognised religion as the determining factor of economic and political interests, because the religious rivalries and antagonism that the approach produced suited their interests as an imperial power. Religious feelings of Muslims and Hindus were excited, and there were riots in which uneducated masses of the two sides attacked, injured or killed each other; and the real excitors, who were really to gain, kept aloof as distant onlookers of the diabolical fun. Throughout history, in all killing done in the name of religion, the real gainers have always managed to escape and to sacrifice those who gained practically nothing. It was the devil exploiting the innocent ignorance in the name of religion; it was the exploitation of the credulous poor by the designing aspirant.

In all religious violence, reason has been absent as it has been absent from other manifestations of violence. When 'reformers' thrust one God upon the believers of many idols with violence, their mind was surcharged with the extreme aspiration that all should have their belief. They



too were victims of their inspirers who worked them up to such a pitch that they took up swords to spread the belief. Man's mind responds to emotions more readily than to reason; more readily because the effect of an emotional appeal is instantaneous. God is as incomprehensible as are idols; but while one can understand men being converted to the belief of one God from that in many gods, one can not appreciate why the sword should have been used to convert the unwilling. Why did it not occur to the 'missionaries' that violence was a greater sin than the 'sin'—conceding that it was a sin—of the belief in many gods? Why was the 'missionary' not horrified at the thought that he was going to kill a fellow being who had refused to be converted. The answer will be found in the context of the contemporary history. Killing for selfish ends or in consequence of provocation was made a recognised practice by wars and other affrays, and men excited to passion in the name of a belief adopted that practice as a matter of course. In every case, it was the emotion that pushed men towards committing violence. Selfish men, whether their selfishness is aimed at making material gains or securing mental satisfaction or satisfying an ego, have been exploiting the experience that men can be fooled by emotions and are not in the habit of reasoning. Most men of wealth, everywhere in the world, are interested in maintaining religious fervour in people and spend for it as they spend in advertisements. In the economic order they have created, unemployment is inevitable, and in a country of several religions when jobs are few and the unemployed are many, the rich employer can and often does discriminate between men of different religions and in favour of those of his own religion. And there is a religious rivalry without any element of religion in it. And when this rivalry breaks into violence, he earns the gratitude of one side by financial help and becomes a champion of religion. It is not the peace of religion but its mischievous fervour that suits him. Even politicians exploit this fervour.

As we have discussed above, all violence emanates from the mind; mind is the commander, and hands and feet are the soldiers. Therefore it is the mind that, as wise men have again and again advised, should be disciplined by reason; it should become a controller and cease to be a rash commander. A mischievous man of wealth acts with a perverted reason. His moves even in the name of religion are well calculated. He keeps priests and preachers



inclined towards him by means of customary rewards. His mischief has gone on unchecked because the masses have not disciplined their minds by reason. They do not ask themselves: what does it matter to them if others have different beliefs? The suggestion that people of different faiths generally tolerate each other with equanimity cannot be accepted as the proof of the victory of reason. The seeming indifference is the result of circumstances that differ from region to region; where economic conditions do not hold out any threat to leaders of religious mischief, the indifference is more potential than in a region where economic conditions are alarming. Inside the seeming tolerance lurks everywhere the superior complex of one's own religion and a feeling of dislike, may be mitigated dislike, of others. Those believing in the faith prescribing one God may assert that there is reason in their claim; they may assert that idols are mere stones and to treat them as gods is negation of reason. On the other hand, the idol worshippers may lay a similar claim to reason; there is one Supreme God no doubt, but He carries out His behests through so many members of his family; these many gods are given physical forms, inanimate of course, to give the mind a picture of the thing it is asked to adore. The mother of reason in either case is a certain belief. We are concerned here with reason which is the product of mind, and not of belief. That reason will treat all beliefs alike, more or less, and when it has prevailed, the germ of superiority complex or dislike will no more be lurking inside the tolerance. Religion will then become merely an embodiment of spiritual beliefs. It will then cease to be an adviser of moral behaviour because moral behaviour, being a necessity of social life, cannot have different standards in the same society, nay in entire human society.

A disciplined mind, equipped with the right type of education, will be a questioning mind, which will have to be satisfied by reason, and will refuse to be misguided by emotions.



## Chapter XIX

### PAIN, PHYSICAL AND MENTAL

Always the object of violence is to cause pain; and pain is both mental and physical. Every creature is by nature conscious of pain without any previous experience of it. This pain is physical and not mental; consciousness is, of course, a mental affair. If a cat sees a dog even at some distance, it runs away, being conscious of the pain that the dog can cause. But a dog cannot abuse a cat and cannot cause the mental pain that the abuse conveys. An abuse is an articulate wording given to man by language. There is often anger in the dog's barking, and man must have been giving some intelligible expression to his anger or evil intention before he invented language. This expression must have been a warning that should the man to whom it was addressed fail to succumb to the desire expressed, violence would follow. Language gave definiteness, precision and variety to expressions of anger and evil intention, which mean that it provided men with instruments to cause mental pain. If A, whose mother tongue is Hindi, abuses B, whose mother tongue is English and who does not understand Hindi, there will be no mental pain caused to B. It is the particular articulation given to words and understood as such by the abuser and the abused that causes mental pain to the latter. If language-makers had given a word of abuse a different meaning, for example of praise, they would have given the mind hilarity instead of pain. Words of hilarity and pain are like different facial expressions, which, too, vaguely perform the same function. Words do so precisely and often more effectively. Some terms of abuse have the same effect on the mind as injuries have on the body; some have more and some less. To the sensitive, the mental injury of an abuse is more painful than that caused to limbs.

Pain is used, as is discussed in the previous chapter, to achieve different ends. The end of an aggressor is different from that of one charged with regulating social life. The former has numerous forms; the most widespread of them become in feudal society a part of the regulated life. Feudal lords and their agents abused their subjects and servants for what they felt as minor 'offences', and inflicted



physical injuries for major 'offences'. Often the choice of punishment, mental or physical, was the result of the offended feudal lord's mood at the moment. If a subject who was forced to work for his lord without payment, did not work wholeheartedly, he was abused, and the abuse had its effect. If the man again abated the effort, he was again abused, and this time more loudly and more filthily; now the effect was wholly as desired. Even a paid worker can behave similarly and is dealt with similarly. This means that mental pain often produces the same effect as physical pain. A discretionary master prefers mental pain, where it is likely to succeed, to physical pain. Time was when those charged with regulating social life inflicted severe physical injuries on the guilty, which included even the cutting off of limbs. Those brutalities turned administrators' minds to preference for mental pain; a prisoner clamped in jail for a certain period constantly suffers from mental pain, even if he is well fed and kept in healthy conditions. There are, however, cases—exceptions of course—where mental pain gradually ceases to be effective. But even exceptions are not immune from the sense of mental pain; if a convict is acclimatized to jail life, he will experience the same mental pain as others do when shut up in a solitary cell.

Pain produces generally the same results in every walk of life. In old days, corporal punishment was considered an inevitability by teachers for children who did not learn their lessons. It co-existed with shouting and abusing. The actual pain previously caused and the fear of similar pain in the future ensured the desired result. Then came a time when beating of children was looked upon with disdain almost as a crime. The alternative was mental pain; and the shirking child was abused. Here is a sample of the abuse: 'you are a rascal; you are a mean fellow; you are a disgraceful and shameless boy; you are an ass, worse than an animal; your hands and feet must be broken, then only you would behave properly; your parents are damnable creatures, else they would ask you to learn your lesson', etc. etc. The mental pain these abuses caused was severer than corporal punishment. It demoralised children; it virtually negated the achievement it secured. The approach again changed; psychologists suggested that different children constituted different psychological problems, which must be treated as such. This approach precluded both physical and mental pain as punishment and prescribed other remedies; those who would not respond



to any treatment should be abandoned and left uneducated.

If mental pain is as much a manifestation of violence as physical pain, it deserves to be abandoned not only in educational institutions but also in the broad sphere of society completely. Can it, one might ask, be abandoned completely in the institutions in the manner psychologists have suggested? The answer is, NO. They approach the question to the extent it is concerned with the results of abuses; that is, they concern themselves only with the mental pain that can be called visible: they have yet to take cognizance of the mental pain that comes, not from teachers, but from society. The mental pain that the distinctive bearing and possessions of a rich boy cause a poor boy does not come from any abusive words; it comes through the eyes with which he sees the distinction, and it comes through the ears into which the distinction is dinned by others. This part of the question is left untackled, is not even talked of, because it refers to inequalities which cannot be touched. It affects most children, most men and most women.

The opposite of mental injury caused by articulate words is supposed to be culture. A cultured man, it is usually assumed, is one who does not use abusive language and does not injure anybody's feelings. Leading men of feudal society had developed, according to the common belief, a high culture. It was, like the Greek republics and the democracy of imperial countries, a culture of a limited number. A leader of feudal society displayed a high sense of culture in his dealings and behaviour with his equals, but was wild like a brute to his subjects and servants. Civilization or culture are reciprocative things; A is sweet and not abusive to B because if he shows a contrary behaviour, he will be paid back in the same coin. But A is bitter and brute to C because C, being his subject or servant, cannot retaliate. In the limited sphere of their culture, feudal lords minimised the chances of mental pain to themselves but caused it, as if with vengeance, to the multitude. The pain they caused was both visible and invisible as in the case of school children. And as in their case, the visible pain was reduced to the minimum in the industrial age, but the invisible remained. The process of reduction of the former (visible) did not affect the favourable inequality and was therefore tolerated without much ado; that process cannot be tolerated in the case of the latter (invisible) because it will harm the economic distinction.



Culture as it is practised in the society of economic inequalities is a culture of social distances dividing men according to their economic positions. Men of higher status keep a certain distance between themselves and their subordinates, and thereby give an impression of the respective positions of the two. They do not abuse subordinates; they treat them with all civility, and yet, to the discerning, they cause an amount of mental pain; it arises spontaneously from the distance. Like other pains inherent in economic inequalities, this too has become tolerable; it is not expressed unlike the pain, physical or mental, that comes suddenly and is not part of the regulated social life. To some, distances are justifiable as a psychological necessity. A certain amount of aloofness avoids, they argue, the natural human weakness which closeness and intimacy is likely to prompt and in which subordinates may grow negligent. This means aloofness maintains discipline while closeness endangers it. Analysed further, it means that the element of fear inherent in aloofness is necessary for discipline. This element takes us to historical background of aloofness. Aloofness originated in economic inequalities and flourished in feudal society where culture (limited in scope) and barbarism (widespread) existed side by side. Much of that aloofness represented feudal fear, which was inherited by the bureaucracy of succeeding administrations. A minister of feudal times would never reconcile to a treatment of equality with a clerk. The necessity in his case was the satisfaction of his ego; fear as a necessity for discipline occupied, if at all, a secondary place. Later on, ego was not ostensibly claimed but it remained, as it was inseparable from the environments of the distance.

That fear is a feudal trait (to go back only to recent history and no further back) is borne out by the epithets accompanying and distinguishing different grades. Like abuses, certain words were prescribed to convey submission, often abject, to different people of high grades; each word or term denoted a different connotation of distinction; the epithets subjected the lowly to different degrees of humiliation. Humiliation had the same demoralising effect as the victory of the strong over the weak had in a violent action. It was a device to disarm psychologically those rendered economically inferior. It intended to cause mental pain to an extent that the inferior might always regard his economic superior as his superior in all respects. It worked successfully, so successfully that the victims



lost all sense of mental pain and regarded humiliation as their proper position. Any violation of the prescribed modes and expressions was construed as a rebellious mental attitude, and if found so on inquiry, would lead to punishment of the guilty. The consciousness of superiority was therefore preserved scrupulously from grade to grade. The humiliation of many for the few was made part of culture, which was maintained with the fear of force. If the code of culture prescribed that all people must stand up and bend low before a high personage whenever he passed before them, it would have to be observed unreservedly; a departure would not only be punished but would be condemned even by the obeying multitude. In the thousands of years of this 'culture', humiliating terms became the routine of social behaviour; and distances were recognised as a necessity even by the humiliated.

Is fear, of which the distances are today a mild form, ensuring efficient discharge of duty? Is it necessary in other spheres for disciplined conduct of social life? The epithets of distinction are justified vigorously in countries where feudal institutions still exist and in countries where feudalism has died out but its bones are preserved in vindication of other forms of inequalities equally indifferent to economic plight of the multitude, and less enthusiastically in countries where, despite disparities, economic miseries of the multitude have been reduced to some extent. In the last variety of countries the distances of feudal distinctions of respectability are not considered an inevitable prerequisite to ensure disciplined performance of duty; the sense of duty must come not from that prerequisite but from a mind duly trained. Once a man unconsciously submitting himself to humiliating forms, however mild, becomes conscious of them, he will, if he can maintain his economic existence and is not held down by fear of punishment, ignore them; he will refuse to honour them as part of culture. He will once again grow conscious of the mental pain they cause. Such an attitude of mind will be the victory of reason over belief—distances of respectability are not sustained on reason but on a time-honoured belief.

The term 'subordinates' gives the distances a more eloquent expression. It implies association of inferiority—and conversely superiority—with the means of livelihood, which should be repulsive to true culture; it will be repulsive to the sense of self-respect where such sense has



not been sapped by tradition. In an economy of master and servant, subordination or inferiority is bound to be associated with the means of livelihood. It is reflected in public administration where all workers are termed as government servants, and where these servants are divided into superior and inferior grades on the pattern of master and servant. The terms 'public workers' and 'public servants' are supposed in common parlance as synonymous terms, but they are not as they have conflicting historical background. The 'servant' is the less humiliated successor of the 'slave'; he belongs to a society in which the king was the richest and most superior man and all others were his subjects, and in which the poor were subordinate to the rich. It was retained in democracy because democracy retained intact the economy of master and servant as also many other forms of inferiority created and sustained by its predecessor, the autocracy. In a set-up of economic justice, all working people work for one another; the relationship between them is not that of master and servant but that of workers and workers, as it was before the coming into existence of the master.

When the master of a factory, for example, goes to the desk of a servant, the servant should, according to the prevalent rule, which is treated as part of culture, stand up. This practice is a practical expression of the servant's acceptance of the master as his superior, as his bread-giver in fact. It is the culture of one's dependability on another for bread; in such a dependability, all forms of humiliation, however mild, go on unchallenged. A challenge presupposes assurance not only of bread but all necessities of life that a man is capable of giving himself with the dint of honest, self-respecting work. In the absence of the assurance, honest discharge of duty will be an incomplete performance without due observance of the discipline and culture of the master-servant society. This culture affects the sale and purchase also in which subordination is not enforced by any rule. If a shop-keeper, who has many competitors in his town, behaves with his customers as submissively as a servant does with his master, it is because of his consciousness of the fact that to expect submissiveness is everybody's ego, much more of one who gets it unduly. It cannot be conceded as part of the shop-keeper's general behaviour because he does not behave similarly with one who is not his customer. The shop-keeper is a profit-maker unlike a worker whose wage is a fixed amount. Therefore, while there can be a limit of the worker's sub-



missiveness, there can be none of a profit-maker. In a society where work is not the only criterion of income, one of the devices of making extra money is flattery, submissiveness. There the master, whether in business or public administration, is by tradition susceptible to flattery and submissiveness, and if he has a make-believe answer to the possible criticism, he will go out of his way to oblige the flatterer. If the mind is differently trained, it will react disdainfully to flattery, which will go down and yield place to the sense of self-respect.

The system of one's bread depending on another permeates the family life also in which the bread-earner is accorded greater honour and facilities than others; often he himself claims these. They or he cannot ordinarily get over the element of subordination in bread-earning. The tradition cannot leave them unaffected; it must make them adopt the general pattern of behaviour. An unemployed relative, on the verge of starvation, comes to the employed, who allows him to stay with him. The helpless unemployed is beholden to the employed more than the employed is to his master, because the bread he is getting is not his right. Where earning bread with work is not a guaranteed right, how can the eating of unearned bread be a right? And how can the employed be expected to adopt a different behaviour towards the unemployed relative from the one he receives from the employer? Those who in their magnanimity do not observe the master-servant rule in such cases are exceptions and not the rule. If the educational expenses of a poor relative's son are borne by a rich relative, the former is not only obliged but is expected to remember the obligation and also acknowledge it in the words coined for such purposes. The obligation is great because it enabled the poor's son to earn his livelihood in a comparatively better way. If it is not acknowledged, the lapse will hurt the feelings of the magnanimous relative, and will be dubbed as ingratitude. The mental pain in the remembering and acknowledging is nobody's concern; there is no room for it in the prevalent culture.

There is a chance of mental pain being caused anywhere and on any occasion. A subordinate wishes his superior or master happening to pass by him, but the latter does not respond either arrogantly or carelessly. The feeling of the subordinate, conscious of mental pain, can well be realised, but he suppresses it and again wishes the superior when he passes by him next time. Wishing, in the



culture of superiority and inferiority, must be done by the inferior, and cannot therefore be regarded as wholly a social practice; it is an expression of submission; it is a due which must be paid to retain the means of livelihood. A failure may not result in the loss of livelihood, but it is likely to produce some adverse effect; and a prudent subordinate must avoid the likelihood. He knows that there is greater mental pain in the loss of livelihood than the one caused by the non-acknowledgement of respectful salutation.

A physical or mental pain that gives corresponding mental pleasure to the one who causes it is nothing unusual in a society of inequalities. As civilisation and culture have been advancing, men have been adopting different ways for the gratification of senses. Ways that do not harm the self or others will be characterised as innocuous; those that do, will have to be discarded as anti-social and immoral. Beastly traditions of society have the effect of a systematic education on the mind and make it receptive to sensuous pleasures arising out of physical and mental pain caused to others. The *Bhagwat-Gita*, regarded as the best flower of Hindu scriptures, analyses the process of this 'education' thus:

If one Ponders on objects of the sense, there springs Attraction; From attraction grows desire, Desire flames to fierce passion, Passion breeds recklessness; then the memory—all betrayed—lets noble purpose go, and saps the mind, Till purpose, mind, and men are all undone.

(From Sir Edwin Arnold's *Song Celestial*)

This analysis gives the true picture of the mind made receptive to pleasures whose source is physical or mental pain caused by the receiver to others. Take, as an example, a frequent occurrence of human society—war. The invader's senses are conscious of pleasures that wealth is capable of giving. His senses create attraction for wealth; then comes the desire to possess it. As there is obvious injustice in this desire, the man cannot turn to reason; on the contrary he is filled with passion because it is only in that state of mind that he can get the thing towards which he is attracted. He is now a reckless man, devoid of reason. His mind is wide-awake as to his selfish aims but blind to the pain he is going to cause to others; nay, the pain of others is his pleasure. His mind, made diabolical by the process, is pleased as the news of the killing of the enemy's men is conveyed to him. As if this pleasure is not enough, he adds to it, when he is victorious, by tor-



turing the enemy in his custody.

No man—there are exceptions of course—will like to cause, for the sake of his sensuous pleasure, pain to another when his sound mind is in a sober state. The mind is not sound and cannot assume sobriety when it is filled with passion either for aggression or revenge. It generally returns to sobriety when the aggression or revenge ceases to exist. If a victor is asked to kill a man, who has never come in clash with his interests, he will flatly refuse to do so; he may even be pained by the request. Killing does not give him pleasure as a rule; it is pleasure when it ensures him access to the object of his attraction. Then he is a different man; a man of unsound mind. The phenomenon may be illustrated by another example. A few robbers capture a man possessing a good amount of currency notes and take him to their leader; they also capture a semi-naked poor man loitering nearby if only to prevent him from informing the police should he think of doing so. The leader not only relieves the rich of his currency notes but also detains him and asks him to write a letter to his wife to send him so much more money. When the victim refuses to carry out the 'order', the leader asks his men to give him a sound beating, and smiles devilishly as blows are being struck at him. He does not relent to the victim's abject submissiveness. But he turns to the other man, the poor, with wholly different attitude of mind, and asks him: 'Do you think you should have reported the capture of this rich man to the police?' 'No sir', the man most submissively replies; 'I am too poor to think of it; I am in tatters, you see, and I am too hungry.' The leader is excited to pity, and turning to his men, says: 'Give him some food; give him some clothes also.' The same man to whom the sight of beating provided a mental pleasure was deriving another kind of mental pleasure just a few seconds later. In the former, there was the attraction of a gain and the desire for it sapped the man's mind; in the latter, the mind was free from attraction and desire. It would not have been free if the poor had replied in the affirmative to the leader's first question. Then he would have constituted as part of the resistance to the fulfilment of the leader's desire for the attraction.

A robber or a thief causes pain not only when he does an evil deed. The fear of him causes mental pain constantly; the fear is constant; particularly for the rich. It remains despite the protection provided by government



and the individuals concerned themselves. No government undertakes to make good the loss caused by thieves or robbers. Its approach is crude; it does not look at such a loss as a cause of pain; to it thieving and robbing are a crime which would be punished if and when detected. If government takes cognizance of pain, it would have to do so comprehensively and exhaustively. Then, in the eyes of government the appropriator of surplus value will be a perpetrator of mental pain to the worker and as such, punishable. Then, the government will not allow mental sobriety and insobriety to be alternated by men at their will. Then, the attraction, desire and passion will not, in succession, be allowed to sap the mind; on the contrary, the mind will be trained for a just social life.

Attractions, which reason cannot justify, are the backbone of a society of inequalities. Therein, moral behaviour is the exception and immoral the rule. Mankind has a history of kings and wars, of the growth of 'civilisation' and 'culture', and of many kindred happenings; but there is no history, no analytical account, of pain, physical and mental, caused to men by men. The law suppresses possibilities of complaints about pain by declaring attraction, the cause of pain, just and lawful. Feudal lords caused no small amount of pain to the actual producers of wealth when they appropriated a substantial part of it, but the law justified their deed and restrained the victims from adopting remedies to relieve them of their pain. It behaves similarly in the industrial economy. We get a grim picture, when we peep into the family of a poor worker, of the chain reaction of pain caused by the rich for the achievement of his attractions. Children quarrel over bread and abuse each other; the father, in his turn, abuses, even thrashes, his wife for not controlling the children, and the wife, in anguish and desperation, returns the abuses. A worse picture is one in which the wife jumps into a well, or the husband throws himself before a running train. There is a trial of strength between the suffering and the extreme deed; usually the former wins, and pain is tolerated as part of human existence. Philosophers characterise and dismiss it as struggle for life, supporting thereby the deceitfulness of the law. They console the distressed with the promise of a painless, pleasureable life in the next world. They are afraid to suggest how it can be secured in this very world, because doing so would bring them in clash with the order of which they might be beneficiaries themselves and in which pleasures



of some are the result of the pain of others.

There is a greater incidence of pain in a country where most people are not assured two proper full meals and other bare necessities of life than in a country where these are easily and adequately available, despite the fact that both belong to an economic system of inequalities. There is a similar difference in their level of culture. In the former, men are subjected to, and willingly suffer, more humiliation than in the latter. The difference is reflected in all spheres of social life. The people of the former put up with maladministration; they grumble but do not actively protest. The road in front of their dingy dwellings may not be cleaned for weeks, the broken drain may be throwing dirty water all around, the rubbish heaps in the lane may be stinking, but they are indifferent even as the authorities are, because this condition is not worse than that inside their own dwellings, because the great effort they make for the little acquisition of the barest necessities of life precludes thinking of anything else, because in their miserable plight they lack the courage to make protests. The mental pain they put up with in earning their livelihood and inside their unhealthy dwellings attunes them for ugliness on the road. On the other hand, the people of the latter country, whose bread-earning is comparatively much less irksome and much less painful to mind, have developed a considerable amount of self-confidence. They have developed the consciousness that in public utility services, discrimination born of economic inequalities does not exist; they asserted their right and succeeded in bringing about efficiency in the administrative machinery. And their better efficiency is an index of their better culture.

But it will be wrong to presume that the element of attraction and its consequent repercussions on the mind do not exist in a country of huge productions. Attractions in a rich country are different from those in a poor country. To the poor of the latter, the things of immediate attraction are better food, better clothes, and a better house to live in; to their counterparts in the former, attractions will consist, for example, of comfort-giving electric appliances, a motor car, a journey in aeroplane. Attraction in either case comes from those who possess things the poor lack. In either case, an attraction may lead to desire, desire to passion, and passion to recklessness. Religion may denounce this attraction and substitute contentment for it and go on denouncing it for thousands of years, but it



will remain, because social customs and the law of the economy of inequalities sanction it. Mind is, no doubt, sapped by the concomitant evils of attraction; but the alternative to it is quiet suffering of the pain which objects of attraction in the possession of others constantly cause. It is difficult to say which is preferable; the preference for quiet suffering comes from helplessness.

An invader, robber or thief's wish for the object of an attraction is different from that of an honest worker intellectually not inferior to the man who possesses the object. A criminal avoids work, and everything that he needs and aspires is an attraction. The mental pain he suffers at his failure is a bit of punishment for the mental pain he sought to cause to his victim. But the worker's argument is honest and logical. The worker of the poor country may argue: 'I am a hard worker; mentally too, I am not inferior to those on higher rungs of the economic ladder. Why am I then denied bare necessities of life? This discrimination causes my mind considerable pain.' That of the rich may argue similarly, and say: 'Then why am I without a car? The possessor of the car uses it for pleasure. His necessity can be dismissed because it consists of his plans to multiply his wealth, which will only excite in me a wish for more attractions and sap my mind further.'

In the midst of causes of pain all around, religion endeavours to give the sufferer a remedy. To the *Gita*, for example, a mind susceptible to pain and pleasure is a weak mind. The *Gita* preaches constant evenness of mental disposition; once that stage is achieved, pain and pleasure will cease to disturb or soothe the mind. If pain reduces mental normalcy to a subnormal state, pleasure raises it to an abnormal state. Failure to get an object of attraction causes pain and success causes pleasure; the success gives pleasure because the failure gives pain. What according to the *Gita*, links the two states of mind is attachment. The *Gita*, therefore, prescribes non-attachment; then there will be no ambition and no disappointment. But the *Gita* or any other book of religion does not discuss this abstruse principle in the context of economic life. The answer might be: the principle is for all and not for some; it is the supreme law of culture. The *Gita* prescribes again and again, in different ways, the rule of evenness or equality; it thinks of the entire human society and not of rare individuals. A starving man, who has drunk from the stream of the *Gita*, may, having practised and attain-



ed evenness of mental disposition, have no thought of pleasure that food will give him at the moment and thus avoid giving further pain to his mind because food is not available; but he leaves behind pertinent issues. Evenness of mental disposition does not include indifference to human rights and duties. In a society where rights are usurped of which starvation is a result, it is one's duty to fight to get them restored. It will be another thing to say that the fight should be fought with evenness of mental disposition, for this fight is not motivated by any attraction whose accomplices are a series of evils; here the noble purpose is not lost but is attempted to be gained; here the mind and man are not undone but applied to a right pursuit.

In the perverted use of religion—the perverted use of the *Gita* is very common in India—which is deliberately promoted by beneficiaries of disparities, mental pain of the poor and the distressed is prescribed to be won over by training the mind to a state of evenness of mental disposition. The attempt cannot succeed and has not succeeded, but it succeeds in inculcating indifference to duty. It mischievously interprets mental evenness as wholly unconnected with material aspect of life, and that being so, all struggle for material evenness or equality is tabooed as undue attraction.

The lofty principles of the *Gita* are preached through the medium of a war: Pandavas declared war on their cousins after the latter had usurped the former's entire share and refused to yield to reason. The Pandavas' war aim was not the acquisition of an undue attraction, but the vindication of justice and right. That fighting is a supreme duty where rights are usurped is a canon which must be resorted to by people wronged by others. Whether they have been really wronged can be rightly and precisely judged only by a mind in a state of mental evenness. Thus fighting and mental evenness are complementary things. But in mischievous interpretation, the direction the *Gita* gives is dismissed as a holy affair. The *Gita* cannot be acted on consistently with the present economic wrongs. Its 'attraction' is interpreted as an evil in the poor; his envious eye should not fall on the wealth of the rich, which is sacrosanct. Its non-attachment is interpreted as 'contentment with what you have.'

Economic justice, it can be contended, will not be an automaton to bring about a culture in which mental or physical pain is non-existent; a good deal of pain comes not from inequalities but from other causes. X will be



regarded as lacking in culture if he talks to Y in bitter language which hurts him mentally. His behaviour is dubbed as vulgarity as against urbanity. X, when told of his vulgarity, may protest that he meant absolutely no disrespect; and he may be right because he had no occasion in life to experience what words cause pain and what pleasure. He may have all his life moved in a society where those words are usually employed and are not taken exception to; it is a society in which an elaborate study of the language has not been made and sense of discrimination has not grown. Take these two terms, for example: 'Give me a glass of water', 'would you please give me a glass of water'. To people, who are unacquainted with the latter form, the former will cause no mental pain; to people, who are acquainted with both, the former will be regarded as unmannerly and may cause a little mental pain. Urbanity is usually a product of education, and where inequalities make education a privilege of the well-to-do, culture of speech is denied to the poor. For no fault of theirs, they are looked down upon as vulgar and are caused a certain amount of mental pain; they are looked at with a derisive smile when they are asked to sign their names and they hang down their heads in shame for their inability to do so. Even if universal education is made possible in the midst of inequalities, there will remain distinctions in linguistic culture; as already discussed, subordinates will employ different language and different manners while talking among themselves from those they are required to employ while talking to their superiors.

In philosophical vein, one might say creatures of the earth are born to suffer: from birth to death, they come across many occasions causing them pain, mental or physical. But the philosophy of surrender has never been man's nature. His mind has been guiding his hands, ever since he first appeared on the earth, to make living convenient, and more convenient; he has been struggling against inconveniences and uncertainties because these caused him mental pain. His mind acts instinctively and hands carry out the mind's orders obediently. If this is the law of nature, why does, the contender might ask, an ascetic, for example, deny himself the convenience of a bedstead and prefer the bare ground to lie on? In the case of other men also, like the ascetic, convenience, as dictated by the mind, is the determinant of their conduct. The worry and effort involved in arranging for the things which



give comfort and convenience are discomfoting and inconvenient to their minds, and therefore their convenience consists in the denial. Such denials, when they are examined of the instinct of natural behaviour and turn it, in mostly traced to conveniences made difficult to achieve by unjust and mischievous economic barriers, which rob the mind of the instinct of natural behaviour and turn it, in desperation, against the conveniences themselves. An ascetic practises forgetfulness of comforts; this is a process of pain which he undergoes to reach a stage where constant pain involved in the struggle to secure conveniences and comforts and in the occasional failures to secure them will no more exist.

Renunciation of comforts is, in religious language, called conquest of senses, which is supposed to be a supreme achievement. But an ascetic does not cease to be part of the world where getting food involves not unoften a certain amount of pain; an ascetic partaking in that food escapes the pain, and therefore his asceticism is, to that extent, escapism. His withdrawal from the life of economic inequalities in which the mental pain of subordination is inevitable is not a withdrawal from the cause of pain; he avoids it but his bread-givers suffer it. He deceives himself and others, maybe unconsciously. He can be compared with a man of primitive ages who did not temperamentally like to suffer the pain involved in agriculture and preferred feeding himself on whatever the nature made him available. Such a temperament, when put to test under the logic of morality, should disallow man the use of everything that human effort produces—food, clothes, civic amenities, etc. But it does not, and exposes asceticism as a product of escapism from the disagreeable realities of life. Religious reaction to those realities should be the determination to fight the evil in them; fighting in this context is a noble action, and escapism is peace of the grave.

Asceticism is treated as a virtue by traditional beliefs. Virtue and evil are compared in religions with god and demon respectively; and legends are told of fights between gods and demons. If virtue can prevail and evil subside by the logic of reason, there will be no fight, and gods will spare themselves as also the demons the pain involved in fighting. But if demons do not yield to reason, the alternative is either fighting or surrender. The variety of asceticism that chooses the latter, takes a personal, selfish view of the evil resulting from the deeds of the demons.



When the victory of virtue is the aim, fighting will have to be adopted as a means to defeat the evil, and the temper of asceticism may be an aid to the means. This, if rightly interpreted, is the meaning of action emphasised in religion; understandably therefore religion and duty are treated by the virtuous as synonymous terms. There is dereliction of duty in the withdrawal from the effect of the evil; and there is due discharge of it in fighting the evil.

If evil is to prevail, religion must be tarnished and made part of the evil; the asceticism of surrender must be declared as a supreme religious act, and fighting as an evil. This kind of asceticism is fed and nurtured by beneficiaries of inequalities; they carry the feeding and nurturing to a point where renunciation is put to shame by dainty dishes. But many an ascetic is not ashamed because his renunciation came from the avoidance of mental pain and physical exertion to his self and not from renunciation of objects. He forcefully refuses to be charged with dereliction of duty; his duty is, he argues, to preach virtue to the world. Feeding himself on the charity of his beneficiaries, his virtue consists of lessons that affirm the system of inequalities and condemn as sin any thought or deed designed to harm it: man must patiently and resignedly suffer all worldly pains in the hope that he will be duly rewarded for his patience and resignation in the next world. The ascetic knows that he has to deal with credulous people who cannot question him as to why he has himself withdrawn from worldly pains, and secured assured comforts from the system which is the cause of their discomfort. A misguided ascetic not only shirks action involving fighting against the evil but allows himself to be made an instrument of misleading others. In the name of religion, he puts a stamp of approval on what religion disapproves.

The argument of the above-mentioned philosophical vein might persist asserting that both mental and physical pain will still remain even if the so-called economic justice is established by the so-called religious action. No pain arising out of inequalities is more distressing to the mind of parents than, the argument will rightly assert, the death of their child. Pain arising out of death, disease, accidents, etc. is supposed to be mostly unavoidable, but intenser. Religious sermons and interpretations have for thousands of years been trying to assuage its effect, but have generally failed to do so. Pain resulting from injury



to the sense of affection is, as the common experience confirms, transitory, while that resulting from economic causes is life-long. In the case of the former, the process of return of the mind to normalcy begins some hours after the occurrence of the cause; in that case, the oblivious layers of time act as healers. In the case of the latter, these layers do not appear, and the pain remains; in that case, the cause is a constant occurrence.

Similar will be the analysis if A, who is a man of sober mind, is abused or slapped by B, who is a man of haughty temperament, and who is not a phenomenon of inequalities by any stretch of imagination. Reason, usually presented in terms of religious advice, prescribes a preventive against mental pain, and wisemen invoke it in such cases: the mind should be so trained that it should ward off the reaction that causes pain. But this preventive, if it can work, will be effective only in cases of transitory causes: it cannot work in the case of the constant cause of pain, and if it does, it will only make the sufferer passive, depriving him of the virtue of action against the evil. (How men of sober temperament and haughty temperament should be fitted into society and whether the latter are curable and can be made as sober as the former is too big a question to be dealt with here. The problem it creates is capable of solution.)

In a society of economic justice and social discipline, a certain amount of renunciation is inevitable. If one, prevailed upon by the sense of justice, voluntarily surrenders part of his possessions, the part which is in excess of his essential needs, one does an act of renunciation. The element of culture in this renunciation is the admission of guilt in the excessive possession; if the renunciation is proclaimed as charity, it is the opposite of culture. Renunciation in the context of economic justice cannot be a rare phenomenon; it will be the rule of social life. This culture men have never cared to cultivate. They have been deceiving themselves with a misnomer: to them fine tastes and their satisfaction by extra possessions is culture. There is logic in the belief that a thing of utility must be cultured with beauty; but beauty cannot represent culture if the material that has gone into its making is the result of denial of essential things of life to many. Then beauty in the possession of the rich will cause mental pain to the poor at whose expense it has come into being. Many men in the present age have a developed social and cultural sense. They observe quite strictly social disci-



pline they have voluntarily imposed on themselves. Take, for example, punctuality. If A has fixed 5 p.m. to meet B at the latter's house, A must be punctual and B must be at his house at the time. If one of them is late, he causes mental pain to the other. And if it becomes the usual habit, men will be causing pain to one another or will give rise to common distrust. Therefore in the self-imposed law of punctuality, there is the tacit agreement that men should not cause pain to one another unnecessarily.

This sense of culture is not allowed to go further and assert itself in economic field because there it cannot be said that pain is being caused unnecessarily. The sense of reason, therefore, is applied a brake to when it crosses into a sphere where it is likely to injure material self-interest. That is the reason why renunciation has been placed on a high pedestal of difficult accessibility, connected with the other world, the world of spirituality. And a belief is created and given currency to that renunciation is not for worldly men: they can amass any amount of wealth and by any means. In keeping with this belief, worldly men have developed a limited social discipline, of which punctuality is one item. Among others are: honesty, trustworthiness, dependability, avoidance of violent language, amiability, self-control. These qualities are necessary even for the smooth functioning of the society of inequalities. If A promises B to send him a cheque on Monday, A must keep his word; failure to do so will not only cause a little mental pain to B but also injure A's trustworthiness. In this way, most attributes of social discipline are in the nature of enlightened self-interest, and cannot be interpreted as having created an altruistic culture for human society. Any example picked up from the numerous all around can illustrate the utter selfishness of this culture: A poor man is given by his master one hundred coins to be delivered to a fellow business man residing a few furlongs away. In the way the man stops for a while at his house to see his seriously ailing child and comes to know that unless such and such medicine is given at once, the child might not survive. There is no money in the house. He has money in his pocket all right, but it belongs to his master, and if he spends out of it, he will not only lose his trustworthiness but will be charged with misappropriation. Having been regarded by his master as an honest, trustworthy man all his life, he decides to risk the child's life rather than blemish his character. He is conscious of the traditional





discipline and not of the fact that what is paraded as social discipline is not a complete code and that a brake was applied at the point from which further extension would have injured the self-interest of beneficiaries of inequalities. The man's anguish at the loss of his child can be well imagined, but he preferred a lighter pain, because a behaviour contrary to the traditional discipline would have condemned him as a suspect for long, and thus caused a pain, not transitory but constant.



## Chapter XX

### THE REMEDY

In social life, money has been occupying the highest place ever since it succeeded the barter system; to earn money is everybody's supreme aspiration—he calls it duty. There is no sense in asking anybody the question: 'what for are you earning money?'. The question will be received with surprise and answered thus: 'Well, I shall buy necessities of life; it is so obvious.' Necessaries are too many; one may say they are limitless. Everybody buys as much and as many as the money in his possession can buy. If a man is thrifty, he saves part of his earning and spends the rest. Most men are not satisfied with what they have bought and what they have saved; their wants will remain unsatisfied even if they spend all they earn. This dissatisfaction results from the numerousness of things available in the market; each has some utility and therefore each is a necessity. Those that are not available to the multitude because of their limited purchasing capacity are usually called luxuries. But the sale of essential things and luxuries is not governed by any rule. More money can provide access to more varieties and a larger amount. The controlling factor is money. Aspiration for money is, therefore, natural; it is easy for anybody to appreciate its power. ('Natural' here means 'traditional'.)

Money, as power, is like an arbitrary ruler. It has introduced no system between supply and needs. Its arbitrariness enables some to acquire an excessive amount of things from the supply, and disables others to get even the bare minimum. Its favours cannot be obtained by honest, hard work; it leans towards unworthy devices. That is the reason why honest, hard work gives the man concerned access to a small quantity and a small number of the numerous things in the market, while the devices to a large quantity and a large number. Being arbitrary in its behaviour, money has undermined the old faithful, intimate relationship between itself and work. To its ruling position, it was elected by work; but in the course of time, it humbled the elector and became an arbitrary king. And just like the king of flesh and blood, its close relationship is with men who achieve distinction by renouncing work.



It is the most perverted renunciation: work is renounced, but its fruits are appropriated in large quantities; nay, work is subjected to producing certain things exclusively for men of distinction. Those things possess the capacity to provide extra comfort, and as such hold out temptations to men who cannot buy them. Money, as ruler, does not lay down a rule that such and such special things are meant exclusively for a certain chosen class; anybody can buy them. Its invitation is open for anybody to obtain its favours by the means usually employed by the favoured, the only condition being that the law of the land should not be violated. But in its scheme of things favours can be secured by a small minority; this has been the experience of the ages. The result is that while the varieties in the market arouse aspirations in many, only a few are able to have a large number of them.

Aspirations and their non-fulfilment disturb the peace of mind. In this state of society, austerity suggests itself as a virtue: instead of hankering after things that one cannot get, one should accustom one's mind to a life of austerity. A mind so trained, will pass through the market unconcernedly; its equilibrium will not be disturbed. In this approach to life, sermons are dilated upon the sin that resides in money; there resides, several religious preachers of the past have urged, hell in gold—gold that is money. They were right because it was money that undermined the dignity of work and subordinated it to laziness. They had no power to depose money from the position of its arbitrary rule, and chose the next best thing which was to denounce it. They had no power to destroy the things that gave rise to aspirations disturbing the mental equilibrium, and chose the next best thing of asking people to hate things that came from extra possession of money. But their advice was of little avail; it did not stop the tendency to aspire. Its failure proved the unavoidability of aspiration as long as the things that raised it existed. To argue that the distribution of a thing in short supply will have to be restricted is no answer to the instinct of aspiration. It raises some fundamental issues.

A thing is in short supply either because nature does not produce it in abundance or because its cost of production is so high that it cannot be within the means of the multitude and its purchasing is restricted to those few whom money favours with an abundant supply. In the arbitrary rule of money, the criterion is purchasing power and not the need. There is, for example, on sale in the market a



limited quantity of an imported fruit which by medical research is found efficacious for patients of a certain disease. To the seller, it is like any other commodity, and he sells it to whoever pays for it. A rich man comes, enquires the selling rate, and buys the quantity he needs or can afford to buy. Then comes a relative of a patient and finding the price beyond his or the patient's means, goes back disappointed. The rich man only added one more delicacy to his lunch, while the poor patient was denied his genuine need. A hospital, to take another example, needs a telephone connection, but cannot afford it because the funds allotted to it by Government or raised from public subscriptions are hardly enough for the salaries of the staff and other austerity arrangements. But a rich man, to whom the monthly telephone bill, is a petty amount, goes in for it. In the former case, the need is essential and denial is inhuman, but in the latter, the need is avoidable and its fulfilment gets the man more favours from money. This contrast is not imaginary; it is a bitter fact of life in many countries, even as are other contrasts resulting from the arbitrariness of money. A sojourn in a hill station during summer is a luxury in a tropical country; a rich man buys it like a purchasable commodity, while a sickly poor, advised by his doctor a brief stay on a hill, is compelled by his incapacity to deny himself the essential need and leave his frail health to be further consumed by the scorching heat.

Short supply is a vital factor of profit-making economy. A business man, when told that by increasing the manufacture of such and such things, he could reduce prices and make them available to a larger number of people, makes an understandable answer—understandable from his viewpoint: The limited manufacture is more profitable because the present buyers, all rich people, can pay the present prices even though they are several times higher than the cost price. The low prices will also, no doubt, yield a good margin of profit, but the total yield will be less than the one earned by high prices and short supply. Why should A then go in for a proposition, which is less profitable and more bothersome? He is right. Business is done not to practise altruism: it is done for profit. When this business principle is extended to medicines, for example, it plays havoc. A poor patient, who is asked by his doctor to have a certain medicine if he wants to get rid of his ailment, is prevented by the prohibitive price from buying it. He might have been able to buy it if



a larger amount of manufacture reduced the sale price.

Things intended to be treated as distinct from common things—in use of the multitude—are deliberately priced high. It is a simple psychological business approach: rich men for whom those things convey an extra comfort would gladly pay the high price which is a small amount to them. The same amount is a big amount to the poor of whose monthly income it is a big slice. There are numerous things that are distinguished as marked out for the rich. They owe their birth to the surplus purchasing power, which is the result of surplus value, generally speaking. Many of them would not have come into existence if society were established and maintained on the basis of economic equity. If their existence be looked at from this viewpoint, they will largely forfeit the tall claim that they represent the growth of civilization. An article of comfort, secured by an individual as a result of discomfort caused to ten men, cannot be reckoned as an achievement even if it displays an element of human ingenuity. Often the maker of an article of distinction does not possess it; it is appropriated by the rich. If the makers were not slaves of the unjust economic system, they would have preferred to make things of general use; in that system of equitable give and take, the basis of progress would have been general good, and there would have been no preference for numerousness for the rich by cutting short the few essential needs of the many. The market then would not have been an exhibition of innumerable things but a stock of a limited number of things all of which would have been for general use.

Numerousness is now an unnoticeable phenomenon. During the thousands of years of its growth, it has effaced from the minds of people the element of injustice inherent in it, and is now taken as a natural manifestation of civilized society. Nobody now sits down to brood as to why this numerousness is the concern of the few and what economic forces bring it about and maintain it. And as it is taken as a natural manifestation, what is usually contemplated by people generally is how to possess more of the numerous things exhibited in the market. Thinking is thus diverted from the right direction to a direction agreeable to the economy of numerousness. The time when the glaring economic wrong was assumed as right by those adversely affected by it was the time of a great victory for men of surplus. Tradition makes a wrong right. In India, according to an age-old tradition, 50 kilo-



grams are reckoned as 40 by the middle man in the case of certain vegetables when he buys them from the producer, but 40 is 40 when he sells them to consumers. The producer knows it—the fact is not concealed from him—and the custom has made him reckon 40 for 50. Tradition, like emotion, has a more powerful effect on man's mind than reason; he does not pause to reason but behaves mechanically according to tradition. There is no extraordinariness for him in the numerousness. The market is an exhibition as natural as the sun.

Most people, whether rich or poor, also think of some others than themselves as sharers in the money they acquire. These others, in most cases, are their dependants, to whom they are attached or whose bread and comfort they have made their responsibility. Generally, one does not discriminate between oneself and one's wife and children. Criminals behave similarly. Criminals are referred to here advisedly; they are impelled to crime to acquire a capacity to buy more things from the market than honest work would have enabled them to do. It was their own individual attraction to things that prompted them to crime, but when the crime puts them in possession of money and when they go to make purchases, they think of their wives and children also. Attachment, in this context, is more a historical than a natural phenomenon; it is historical in the case of males and natural in the case of females. The cow is attached to the calf since birth throughout the lactation period. That she is no more attached to it after that period raises a question for inquiry. Is attachment a natural urge to suckle like the craving for food and water? The circumstantial evidence gives an affirmative answer. The urge is most intense when the breast is full to the brim with milk; as the quantity of milk lessens, the so-called attachment declines and disappears when the breast has gone completely dry. The bull, through whom the cow conceives has had no such urge, and has absolutely no feeling of attachment towards the calf.

Whether men were as completely indifferent to their spouses in the primitive age as bulls are is a question which cannot be answered positively because authentic history of that period is not available. But there is a common agreement that family as an institution is a later development. There was a time when today's relationship of husband and wife and father and son did not exist, and there was no family attachment. The birth of a family with the



coming together of a man and a woman as husband and wife is given either by law or custom. But the attachment they develop for each other does not result directly from the law or custom; it comes from the constancy of association. This constancy is both mental and physical. There may be brief or long periods of agreed separation, but as long as mental association is not disturbed, attachment remains intact. Attachment towards the offspring is the offspring of this attachment. Association is thus the father of attachment which is variously described by terms like affection and love. Association, in the sense used here, includes congeniality and identity of interests. It is not limited to the four walls of the family; but outside, its intensity lessens according to the degree of congeniality and identity of interests. These pre-requisites are believed as existing in a greater degree in blood relations. But there are cases where men not connected by blood relationship develop them to a still greater degree. Even inside the four walls, the binding between the father and the son diminishes according to the degree of diminution in the congeniality and identity of interests.

Attachment has enthralled man's mind. He is a victim of double enthrallment; first, self-aggrandisement, and second, aggrandisement for those to whom he is attached. How to get rid of it? Religious precepts have prescribed detachment in the midst of attachment. It is a remedy to get over the emotional result of association. But religious precepts are usually interpreted as unconcerned with economic affairs; their concept of emotional results is the grief caused to mind by the death of, or injury to, a dear one. If death or injury comes despite all the precautions taken against it, it must be regarded as inevitable. Why should then man trouble his mind by what is inevitable? Attachment, those precepts argue, intensifies feelings and consequently robs the mind of much of its rational faculty. If man, instead of allowing the mind to drift with emotion born of attachment, develops detachment and a sense of duty, he will do all that is possible to save his dependants from death or injury; he will do so with a cool mind, not vitiated and disturbed by the intense feeling of attachment. His action in that case will not arise from attachment but from a sense of duty. Then, he will show the same sense of duty, according of course to his ability, to anybody, whether he is related to him by blood or not. Association or attachment delimits man's sphere of duty, while detachment removes all sense of limitation.



In this approach, the oft-repeated terms, like universal brotherhood, love for humanity, appear as irrational slogans. Love and brotherhood are terms of the delimited sphere of attachment. Attachment in its very nature connotes a behaviour different in its limited sphere from the one shown outside; and it cannot be suggested that instead of substituting detachment for attachment, the latter should be extended from the family to the universe. Then, attachment will cease to mean what it does; bereft of its characteristic of particularism, it will become a synonym of detachment.

In the modern age, Gandhi is the widely known example of detachment. He had wife and sons, and he did his duty by them but was not attached to them, even as he was not attached to his self. His detachment gave his mind the right perspective of things around him; his sense of duty, not defiled by attachment, dictated to him that he should live as the multitude, victims of a minority's sense of attachment, lived. His detachment made him more conscious of economic injustice than others who, unlike him, did not withdraw from attachment. He is dismissed as a rare phenomenon because attachment is the rule and detachment the exception. It is understandable. Thousands of years of family civilization have accustomed men to the delimited attachment, which is taken as a natural rule of society; it distinguishes one's family from the rest of humanity, and the head and members of the family place their interests above those of all others. One may contend that it is possible for attachment to co-exist with a sense of economic justice, and therefore attachment need not be discarded; it ensures greater attention by family members to one another within a manageable small entity. The contention gives rise to a question in which the answer is latent; which is the better agent of attention—sense of duty or sense of attachment? The former ensures clearer thinking than the latter. And since there is particularism in attachment, an attached mind cannot stop thinking of gratifying those (including the self) in the sphere of his particular attention. Only under compulsion can he surrender part of his natural tendency to gratify them.

The element of particularism in an individual is whetted by the pervading particularism all around. X sees most people around him looking for opportunities and many of them formulating devices to get more money unmindful of the repercussions of this act on others, and he emulates them quite mechanically. Ambitious competitions for



family gratification are to be found more in a locality of economically dissimilar families than in one where men of nearly similar means live. If the latter are a group of fixed wage earners belonging to the same category, none of them passes to the other the excitement for greater family gratification; each is no doubt attached to his family, but his sense of particularism is usually not turned to seeking greater gratification because there is no cause for excitement in the immediate neighbourhood. (There is, however, possibility of his getting the excitement from elsewhere because his association is not restricted to the locality.) In the former group of families—imagine it a locality of business men and factory owners—where economic status differs from family to family, the contrast is a source of lasting excitement, and particularism is sought to be gratified constantly. Here, there is intense ambition in attachment, an ambition wandering here and there for new sources of income. The earning members of the families are all running the race for more money. Others' wealth, providing them higher status, is usually talked about in the family, and impels one to put one's family at least on par with them. Often the effect of the contrast is a point of honour, because wealth is the determinant of grades of honour; this effect rises to a dominating position in man's mind, relegating attachment to a sub-conscious state.

When money assumes the dominating position reducing attachment to a subordinate position, the effect becomes the cause, and cause the effect. The reversal can be better understood by an illustration. X, a moneyed man, is more attached to his money than to his wife and children. To him a wife is a purchasable commodity; he has been accustomed to buying beautiful things from the market and throwing away or disposing of old ones. He is attracted to a beautiful woman and deserts his wife or reduces her to the position of a maid servant. He may develop the usual family attachment with the new woman and her offspring; here money produces attachment and not attachment the urge for money.

Where attachment is subordinate to money, it gives society numerous shocking experiences. An ailing infirm father seems to be fast moving towards his end; the son attending on him is advised by the doctor to take him to a hill station where the change of climate would do him good and enhance the chances of his recovery. The son, who is more attached to his business and money, broods over



the suggestion and argues within himself: 'If I do so, it will mean an expenditure of so much; it will also mean closing of the business for a month at least, which will put me to so much loss.' In order to justify his unwillingness, he deceives himself and other members of the family: 'Father should not be put to inconvenience and discomfort in this delicate state of his health; there is no certainty of his being restored to health, and that being so, it will be unwise to risk inconvenience and discomfort.' Where attachment to father is greater than to money, the son would give a contrary argument.

The potentiality of money exposes the so-called naturalness of attachment; it reduces attachment to naught. It was attachment which impelled a father to adopt all possible devices to accumulate money. The family possessed all things its members considered necessary for their comforts; but the father did not stop accumulating. There was no extraordinariness in his ambition; most fathers in a position to use devices did so. He, like them, earned not only for the existing members of the family but also for posterity. His attachment extended to those not yet born. But the attachment was shaken to the root on his death. The sons and daughters fell apart over the distribution of property, and could not settle the issue. They became inimical to each other; the weak link of family attachment gave way before the force of attachment to money. It gave proof of the transitoriness of attachment as the product of association; the emotion was thrown aside by reason. It was no doubt a reason of selfishness and not altruism, but it was reason all right; the reason of selfishness did not allow the emotion of attachment to interfere. The reason every claimant discussed within himself was: 'Why should I be swayed away by attachment and surrender my part of the share to which I am legally entitled?'

By the process of elimination, one will be led to the conclusion that attachment is a self-centred phenomenon; the institution of family has expanded the individual selfishness of primitive variety which remains as assertive as it was then. Attachment for family members or others remains effective only as long as it fits in with the selfishness of the man from whom it has sprung. Man, as a social animal, gets the greatest social satisfaction in his family; there is no reservation or formality in the social association there. Marriage as a contractual arrangement was a social invention of man's mind; as he experimented the invention, he found in it a social satisfaction which he did not experi-



ence before. He already possessed the capacity to produce food for a few mouths more than his own, and in his wife and children he found the most desirable persons who fulfilled his social need to his fullest satisfaction. Association as mother of attachment came later. His individual selfishness remained dominant. He would not brook frustration of the purpose which bound him to the family. If frustration came, he would be persuaded by his selfishness to become self-centred, as he was before he entered the wedlock. But his lust for money would not necessarily abate. The family was one item—quite a big item though—of the satisfaction money gave him. But as possessor of the capacity to secure numerous items, money could be utilised for other substitutes, and he went on making money. Even if he thought of charity as one of the items of expenditure, he did so because it gave him a peculiar satisfaction. If he threw out feasts to friends, he got another kind of satisfaction. His self enjoyed itself in every way he chose of spending his money. To gratify himself, he might prefer spending on a cocktail party to giving that sum to a destitute. He may be belonging to the same locality to which the destitute belongs, and maybe part of the money in his possession came from the exploitation of the destitute, but the money was now his personal possession, and he was the sole judge to decide how it should be spent. He was a social animal all right, but it was none of his duty to sacrifice his pleasure for the sake of a destitute. If he could place his self over those to whom he was once intensely attached, why should he not do so in respect of those towards whom he had no attachment at all?

It is generally a man's self that pushes him on for honour and material possession; his family members and dear ones only enjoy the reflection of the honour he acquires. His self is usually the first in the family to be urged forward by contrast between his possessions and those of others. It is largely the individual selfishness that is responsible for the race of ambitions. This fact has virtually negated the dictum that man is a social animal unless it be asserted that association, whatever its purpose and end, is enough criterion for declaring man a social animal. The word 'animal' in the term gives it no doubt the claim to precision. An animal is individualistic and selfish; it is social if it is gregarious by nature. Men are gregarious, and therefore social. But they have been clamourously claiming that their society is different from



that of animals; that it is a society regulated by law and order. Men will have to decide with a rational mind whether their society is to be a society of social animals enjoying the 'freedom' of the law of jungle or a society of social men established on the basis of law and order of reason. If it is to be the latter, they will have to do detached self-searching to find out whether the individualism of the jungle variety fits in with the law and order of reason; if it is to be the latter, men could not think like the one who preferred a cocktail party to helping a destitute; then men will not be masters of money but subordinate to a equitable system.

Men usually tend to behave mechanically. If social mechanism is based on the law and order of reason, they will behave, though mechanically, in a way different from the one resulting from the social mechanism of the law of jungle. Nature has not condemned man to mischief. It is common experience that man is a repository of both virtue and vice. If the mind inclines towards vice, virtue will subside; if it inclines towards virtue, vice will subside. These attributes existed in men even when they wandered like animals and had not yet created a social relationship of mutual dependability. They behaved virtuously or viciously according to their respective habits. But most men behaved virtuously; they would feed themselves with their own effort; those who behaved viciously were a small minority. As men developed social relationship, virtue further brightened up with a regulated system. It was the development of inherent reason in man.

Surplus changed the direction of reason or virtue towards vice or unreason. It was surplus which led to the production of varieties for men of surplus. The varieties were an attraction towards which those who did not possess these were drawn. If there were no varieties, surplus could not have acted as the means to divide society into different classes. Surplus was thus the root cause of vice rising up and suppressing virtue. The vice in it did not make itself felt when it first appeared. Nay, it falsely assumed the ostensibility of reason. It was contended that a man capable of putting in more physical effort than another had a right to put the surplus he created to any use he liked. But since the things of use were limited, men not possessing surplus did not realise the havoc it would create later on; they did not mind a man of surplus possessing two earthen pots, for example, instead of one which was the general practice. They did not realise that a sur-



plus amount of corn, for example, would not by itself get the possessor an extra thing unless someone else worked on the preparation of extra things. They did not take any warning from surplus even when it came not from an individual's own effort but from the hired effort of others. Now both surplus and the varieties it provided were the result of others' efforts. And Surplus, the vice, became a way of social life; it was accepted as such by all people. The result was a chaotic society, not regulated by an economic law of reason: things to be produced by human effort were determined by the purchasing power of people and not by the essentiality of human needs. The surplus possessed greater power to purchase, and dictated the modes of employment to many men. These many men produced varieties of distinction with the result that often the preparation of essential needs had to be cut short.

Surplus and variety are interdependant: remove the one and the other will die out of itself. Men's minds have been trained by tradition to regarding variety as a vital part of civilization. It is a tradition of beliefs and not reason; the life blood is put into the veins of this tradition by the tradition of sacrosanctity of surplus. But if reason can question surplus, it should automatically question variety. If it does not, it is not full reason; it is undermined by the attraction to variety and by the thought of extra comfort inherent in variety. That is the reason why some critics of economic inequalities attack surplus and spare variety. They proceed on the assumption that everything has a use value, and then jump to the conclusion that it is essential, and that it may not be essential to all human beings but to some. By this explanation, they justify even those things that are in short supply and whose supply cannot be increased; for examples, the needs of an intellectual may be different from those of a manual worker, and different people have different tastes justifying the existence of varieties. This argument concedes to the intellectual a different, perhaps a higher, standard of living, which means that he must have a certain amount of surplus—one may, if one so chooses, call surplus in this context higher emoluments. And it concedes men the right to have their choice from the large variety; it sees no wrong in variety if surplus is not the determinant of purchasing, and economic equity has substituted it.

Most varieties owe their birth and sustenance to surplus. If there were no surplus, the number of varieties would have been fewer, and the smaller number would have been



the result of workers' needs growing in number with better and greater utilisation of natural resources and greater consciousness of comforts. All these came but in a set-up in which surplus monopolised the power of decision as to varieties; much of the comfort these varieties provided would have not been experienced had surplus not been the determinant of varieties—many of the varieties would not have been in existence. This system made human ingenuity a purchasable commodity; men of best brains applied talents to inventing things that would provide more comfort to men of surplus and enable themselves to earn more than the average man did. If their source of income as workers were other workers, their better talents would have been applied to inventing things for the general mass of the people and not for the minority of surplus. The character of essentiality which such varieties assumed came from accustomedness; the accustomedness led to the formation of certain habits peculiar to men of surplus; the have-nots were not attracted to these habits but to the comforts the varieties provided. They were not attracted to varieties as essential needs. Such of them as managed to acquire a certain amount of surplus went in for some of the varieties and became accustomed to them. Those some then became their essential needs.

Therefore we can safely conclude that conversion of rare varieties into essential needs is a process of conversion of habits which begins with the availability of the varieties. The broad fact about numerous varieties today is that they exist with their utility well known, making it very difficult for man's mind to be taken back to its state in the period when they did not exist. If varieties are suggested to be cut short, the suggestion would be deprecated as retrograde; the abolition of certain varieties would be deplored as cutting out part of civilization. So varieties are recommended to be retained with the complacent hope that even in a society of economic equality they will adjust themselves with the variety of tastes and with the belief that some have become essential to some categories of people.

That certain rare things are prerequisites for intellectualism to function is largely a matter of assumption. That intellectualism flourished quite admirably even before those rare things existed is a more powerful fact than the assumption in relation to the present. The prerequisite in the case of Buddha or Christ, for example, was the rejection of the rare prerequisites available in those days.



The mind of a Tolstoy would function quite as adequately in a palace as in a cultivator's hut. What the mind essentially needs is not certain prerequisites but its withdrawal from the accustomedness. What distinguishes a genius from common men is his brain; it is the brain which has made him what he is and not the availability to him of certain things not available to common men. To suggest that a writer should possess a fountain pen and a typewriter while a mechanic need not have these will be stretching the argument to a question. When a society of equitable economy asks itself whether a writer should have a fountain pen and typewriter, it poses the question whether it should have certain things which are of utility to it? What will a mechanic having nothing to type except his private letters do of a typewriter? In a society of surplus, he can, if he is a man of surplus, satisfy his craving for possessions by buying a typewriter, and leaving it to rot in a corner of his house; while a writer, not able to buy one, would have made proper use of it. A typewriter is different from a refrigerator, for example; the former may be of little use to many, while the latter can be used in the same way by any. The latter can give equal comfort to anybody, and cannot be regarded as essential for some people.

As regards the belief that varieties will automatically adjust themselves after the disappearance of surplus and rational regulation of the demand and supply, one will have to examine it psychologically. Varieties have a sinful, criminal history. Ever since they began to appear and have been multiplying, they have been throwing out temptations all around; people attracted by them have been employing all manner of devices, the so-called legal and the so-called illegal, to possess as many of them as possible. By expanding the scope of law, what pass today as legal devices can be made illegal, and this remedy will prevent the law-abiding from acquiring surplus purchasing power. But law is no remedy against law-breakers. To law-abiding men, varieties, although existing in their numerousness as before, will be reduced to their purchasing capacity. It will not be a new phenomenon; already most men deny themselves many attractions because for fear of law they do not take to acquiring money by illegal means. The expanded scope will cut the demand of some and raise that of others. But desire to possess varieties, more varieties than one can afford, will remain as intense as ever and as long as the attractions remain. Therefore the devices



that will be declared criminal by law will remain. It is one thing to check a crime with the force of law; it is quite another to remove the attraction that throws out temptation for a criminal act. And even to the law-abiding, it is one thing to suppress a desire kept up in a state of intensity by an attraction, and it is another to remove the attraction. It is easier to check the primitive kind of thieving—a lazy man committing a theft for the satisfaction of essential wants such as food—than the thieving excited by modern attractions. In the case of the former, an efficient and strict administration will not let anybody remain lazy; laziness can be treated as a disease, and where the disease does not respond to treatment, the law will take its course. But the hidden germ of desire cannot be liquidated by treatment as long as it is constantly fed by attractions; when attractions are removed, the desire will die out of itself. A large number of varieties are an economic phenomenon of surplus; they can be allowed to exist after the abolition of the economy of surplus only at the constantly lurking risk of exposing the new economy to attacks by the germs inherent in those varieties.

This argument may be illustrated by a case of bribery. An official supplements his monthly emoluments by bribery. He does so because he knows that the additional money he gets also possesses buying capacity as the legal amount he gets does. He goes to the market and buys certain items of varieties which he could not afford to buy with his fixed emoluments. The temptation to accept a bribe came from attractions in the market; if they did not exist, there would have been no temptation, at any rate in that form. But, one might suggest, temptation may still be there; it may be for quantity if not for variety: the bribe-taker can wish to buy a larger quantity of the restricted varieties and fulfil this wish by making an additional income through bribe. The answer that can be given without any meditation is that while in an economy of unlimited varieties, the bribe-taker has a larger scope to put his ill-gotten money to his personal use, in an economy of limited varieties—available to all and sundry—the scope is very much limited; a larger quantity may often be unnecessary to him. An economy of restricted possessions will be a controlled economy—the control need not necessarily be official for all times to come; it will crystallise itself into a social code. For example, each family will have as many chairs as are allowed by the criterion determined by society's economy; anybody who possesses more will expose himself to social



ridicule and make himself answerable for his unsocial conduct. In fact, the wish for additional possessions will have disappeared, and nobody will think of getting an extra chair.

The idea underlying the above discussion is that money must be deprived of the power of mischief, it must be removed from the path of unreason and injustice and put on the path of reason and justice. When money's diabolical freedom is restrained, a man may go all around with a bundle of currency notes with a view to buying many things that the common man does not possess, but he will return home disappointed after discovering that his currency notes were mere pieces of paper. The mischief lies not in money itself, but in the unlimited purchasing capacity imparted to it. Coins have substantially been displaced everywhere by paper money. And paper is paper after all; paper money requires certain prerequisites to be reduced to paper. It is in the hands of a government to bring about those prerequisites; it is in the hands of the people themselves to do so. What are the people to do? They have only to bring before their mind's eye a glimpse of the history of the evolution of surplus and its manifestations and then to undo those manifestations. They yielded unconsciously in the beginning to satisfying the demands made upon them by surplus: they made their mental faculty and physical effort available to preparing varieties for men of surplus, varieties denied to themselves. Having become conscious now, they will refuse to supply their mental faculty and physical effort for manufacturing distinctive varieties. They will tell the government and the people:

"We like varieties, but we hate them as symbols of social distinction and discrimination. Take for example a radio set. We bow before its inventor and we know its utility. But we will have to hate its existence in a system in which it is possible only for a small minority to possess it. As a vehicle of conveying news, music and other things, it is of as much use to A as to B; we will not allow it a place in our economy if A can have it and B cannot. We cannot allow it even if A and B have equal economic status, because B may have gone in for something else, but the desire to have a radio set is lurking within him, and that being so may arouse an evil thought in him. We want to reduce incentives to evil thought as far as possible."

The evil in man must be suppressed; it can be suppressed either by the force of law or by a social conduct as-



serting itself automatically. Distinctive possessions are tolerated today because tolerance is imposed by law. Breaches of law follow it like its own shadow. The element of distinctiveness will remain to some extent even in a society of equitable economy as long as divergent attractions are not reduced to general utility; for example, a radio set will cease to be an attraction if instead of remaining as an alternative, it is provided to every family as a thing of utility. A society whose economy is based on the concept of utility and not attractions makes thieving useless; it automatically reduces thieves to ineffectiveness; it reduces the necessity of law to the barest minimum. In vain will a thief go around looking for a thing which he does not have—he has everything which others have.

From times immorial we have been hearing from religious preceptors and others that austerity is a virtue, that men should not be attracted to attractions, that men should exercise self-control. But these teachings have always fallen on deaf ears because instead of attacking attractions the teachings asked them to be ignored with indifference. By their very nature, attractions will attract men; they possess the power to corrupt society, and the remedy is their abolition and not indifference to them. A virtue—if austerity is a virtue—is of little practical value if its adoption is optional and if it is not adopted by all. The past thousands of years have given man the experience that virtue must have certain prerequisites to succeed: The teachings, one might say, have themselves become part of the system in which the attraction of varieties is allowed to exist; remove the attraction, and there will be no use of the teachings.

When a law becomes part of man's habit, it ceases to require the force provided for its enforcement, but force is necessary until habit and custom make it (the force) useless. As is well known, force is seldom actually used; the fear of force is often enough to ensure compliance. Whether the fear of force can bring about a new order as visualised in the above discourse is an intricate question. Force, in the context of law, is the force maintained by government, whose fear can be as effective in bringing about the new order as it is in the case of ordinary laws. The current definition of law is a government enactment. Even an autocratic government enjoys the same authority, although it derives that authority from its force and not from the people. In fact, whatever be the form of government, sovereignty resides in the people; whether people



are allowed to exercise it or not is another matter. And where people are allowed to exercise it, there may be obstructions in their way, including the obstruction of ignorance, preventing them from proper and rational exercise of the power. In any case, it is undeniable that the authority to make a law belongs primarily to people. The greatest deception in the history of human race is the creation of an atmosphere for the claim that people like the present order and do not want a change; that means most people prefer to remain poor, destitute and down-trodden so that the small minority of the rich may lord it over them. This atmosphere is a whirlpool of jugglery in which people are caught and from which they find it difficult to get out. If this jugglery is made insurmountable and if it prevents enactment of laws for the new order, people will have to think how to exercise their sovereign right independent of it.

Let us think for a country of primitive methods of agriculture engaging a majority of the population. They not only feed the surplus-possessing minority, residing mostly in towns, but with some kinds of land produce enable it to manufacture distinctive varieties. Let us imagine the people, who constitute the agricultural majority, serving a notice on those constituting the distinctive minority telling them that if the distinctions of varieties are not abolished within a certain given period, all supplies of land produce will be stopped. Such a notice will be the most shocking event of the history of the evolution of surplus. There is a force behind the notice; it is not the force of a government army equipped with modern arms; it is the force of sovereignty; it is the force of the law made by the people themselves and not through the process of jugglery. In fact, it will be a challenge of non-violence to violence if the government and the legislature arbitrarily decide to undo the notice with force. A government ordinarily uses force in the name of law; but such a law will have been superseded by the law made by the people themselves under which they issued the notice. It is, in fact, the Gandhian way of Satyagrah.

In a country where the machine has reduced the agricultural majority to a small minority, the force behind the notice will not be proportionately reduced. The land does not belong to the machine; it belongs to people, as all natural resources do. They possess the power to reject the machine if it behaves irrationally or they can compel it to behave rationally. They will tell the rich minority that



they will not work the machine and they will not allow anybody to work it until the production of food and other things is rationalised. Reason will be on their side, and unreason on the other side. They will reject the theory of ownership as a downright irrational theory; every machine is the product of natural resources and human labour. Natural resources belong to the entire humanity, and so does human labour whose sum total is made up of the contributions made by all for all. Money or ownership does not fit in anywhere in this simple philosophy of life.

There is a false—one might say, foolish—satisfaction in ownership, which comes from custom and not from reason. X, for example, is the owner of the house he lives in, and has the satisfaction of ownership. Where does this satisfaction come from? It comes from those who too are owners as also from those who are living in rented houses and do not have their own. To own the house you live in gives a feeling of superiority to one who lives in a rented house. What is the practical effect of this feeling? If the two persons contrasted above have the same monthly income, the owner gives his family some extra things which the other cannot because a part of his income goes to the landlord. The moment the extras become non-existent and there is a common standard of living, there will be no material advantage in the feeling of ownership. All ownership, whether of machines or other things, will similarly stand bereft of material advantages.

By thus abolishing attractions for men of surplus, society will not only be reducing the power of extra money to utter ineffectiveness but will also be abolishing the urge for surplus-making. It will be the undoing of injustice that has been afflicting society ever since men took to settled life. For thousands of years, the human race has been suffering—has been compelled to suffer—in doing all manner of service to a minority. If it has patiently suffered for the minority, it can proudly suffer for itself also: it can refuse to allow its physical and mental energy to be used for making varieties for a minority; nay, it can prevent the minority from unjustly appropriating the resources of the earth by means of labour saving devices. It can claim that the resources belong to the entire humanity and must be distributed equitably. It can bring home to the minority the foolishness in self-aggrandisement and attachment; and if the teaching does not produce the desired effect, it can, by self-discipline and readiness to suffer, make it im-



possible for the minority to enjoy the abuse and misappropriation of resources. The world has seen numerous conflicts, most of which have only complicated the economic system and given incentive to men of surplus. And most conflicts were thrust upon the people, and not created by them. If only conflicts can bring about a change, let the future conflict be sponsored by people and for economic justice. A beginning may be made by the people of a poor country, suffering from accidents of history. They will first confront the minority of their country with their arguments; then, they will approach other countries and the United Nations. Theirs will be the practicable approach to end violence not only in the country but in the world. It will not be an optional religious approach; it will be an ultimatum of reason to unreason. It will be a conflict to end conflicts. They will tell the addressees: 'Your conflicts have been begetting conflicts because they were all motivated by ambitions to get a disproportionate share at the cost of others. As long as that motive remains, conflict will remain; and today's enjoyers of the disproportionate share may be tomorrow's sufferers. It will be self-deception to believe that a nation of privileges will continue to be a nation of privileges for all times to come; today's aggrieved may become aggressor tomorrow. The 'tomorrow' may take decades or even longer to come. But come it must. The key to the lasting peace will be found in equitable distribution of the wealth of the world. If you agree to it you turn a new leaf in the history of the human race. If you do not, we will summon all the force at our command to deprive you of the unjust privileges you enjoy. We have no intention to harm you; we will reduce you to an economic level as justified by the resources of the world and their equitable redistribution among the people of the world.'



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By the same Author

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